75/32
c

The Bancroft Library University of California/Berkeley
Regional Oral History Office

Earl Warren Oral History Project

Tarea Hall Pittman

NAACP OFFICIAL AND CIVIL RIGHTS WORKER

With an Introduction by

C. L. Dellums

An Interview Conducted by
Joyce Henderson

Copy No. ___

© 1974 by The Regents of the University of California

Tarea Hall Pittman
May 1973

Commentator of "Negroes in the News," Station KDIA, Oakland, California.

'Mother' of state's civil rights fight Tarea Pittman dies at 88

By Brett Mahoney
Tribune staff writer

Tarea Hall Pittman, one of the pioneers of the civil rights struggle in Northern California died Wednesday in Berkeley.

Mrs. Pittman, 88, former West Coast regional secretary of the National Association of Colored People and host of a black affairs radio program for fifty years, died quietly in her sleep Wednesday afternoon at the Kyakameema Skilled Nursing Facility after a lengthy fight with a brain tumor.

"She was the mother of the civil rights movement in California," said Lawrence Crouchett, director of the Center for African American History and Culture.

From a family of farmers in Bakersfield, she was the first black student to graduate from the junior college there. She moved to Berkeley in 1923 and earned her masters degree in social welfare from the University of California.

Mrs. Pittman was a walking encyclopedia of this century's black civil rights movement. She lived it, led it and talked about it all her adult days.

She was a member of the NAACP for over 75 years and as West Coast regional secretary during most of the 1960s, she helped build the organization in the Eastbay and elsewhere west of the Mississippi.

Tarea Hall Pittman was a member of the NAACP for over 75 years and as West Coast regional secretary during the 1960s, she helped build the Eastbay organization.

"She was a fighter and a good fighter," said Eugene Lasartemay one of Mrs. Pittman's coworkers in the NAACP.

But it was her voice and elocution that Mrs. Pittman was best known for. For 50 years she brought Bay Area listeners "Negroes in the News" on KDIA radio which under previous owners was named KWBR.

Aleta Carpenter, now general manager of KDIA, remembered listening to Mrs. Pittman when she was growing up.

"My grandmother would sit us down in front of the radio and we were not allowed to go to the bathroom or sneeze or anything. When it was over she would say, 'When you grow up I want you to speak as well as Tarea Hall Pittman,' " she said.

Mrs. Pittman, whose late husband, Dr. William R. Pittman, was the first black dentist to practice in Berkeley, was never paid for her broadcasting work. Until 1985 she did it as a public service.

Carpenter said that Pittman's primary interest was getting information out whether she was on the radio or just talking to people at the supermarket.

She wanted people to know that there were black doctors, judges, architects and funeral directors who had overcome great obstacles and were role models for other struggling black Americans.

Mrs. Pittman is survived by three sisters who all live in the Eastbay: Eugenia Greene, 91; Clarice Isaacs, 84 and Faricita Wyatt, 78.

A memorial service will be held 3:30 p.m. Sunday, August 4 at Fouche's Hudson Funeral Home, 3665 Telegraph Ave., Oakland.

OBITUARIES

OAKLAND TRIBUNE
August 2, 1991

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE
August 3, 1991

Radio Host Tarea Hall Pittman Dies

Memorial services will be held tomorrow for Tarea Hall Pittman, former West Coast regional director of the NAACP and a longtime radio personality who helped desegregate the East Bay public transit system.

Mrs. Pittman, perhaps best remembered as the voice of "Negroes in the News" which aired over Oakland's KDIA radio for more than 40 years, died Wednesday in Berkeley after a long illness. She was 88.

A native of Bakersfield and a member of one of the oldest pioneer families of Kern County, Mrs. Pittman was the first black student to graduate from Bakersfield Junior College.

After receiving a bachelor's degree from San Francisco State University and a master's degree in social welfare from the University of California at Berkeley, Mrs. Pittman worked for several years as a social worker in San Francisco and in Contra Costa County.

Mrs. Pittman devoted her life to human rights. Although she never sought public office, she became known along the West Coast for her activity and leadership in civic affairs, delivering hundreds of eloquent speeches about national social conditions.

"She belonged to so many organizations and was just a hard worker for civic affairs. She was the moving spirit of women in the East Bay and really ahead of her time for a woman," said Tom Fleming, editor of the Sun Reporter newspaper. "In fact, she was ahead of a lot of men, and through her rule in the NAACP she helped break down the bars erected against hiring blacks in the East Bay transit system."

Mrs. Pittman fought against racism for years, Fleming said.

In the mid-1930s, Mrs. Pittman took over as host of "Negroes in the News." For the next 42 years, the show aired on KDIA radio in Oakland, highlighting the accomplishments of African Americans both locally and nationwide.

She also worked to integrate facilities on the campus of UC Berkeley — particularly the barber shop — and often opened her home to struggling students.

In 1952, after more than 10 years of service in the NAACP, Mrs. Pittman was appointed head of the organization's West Coast region. While supervising the organization's operations in nine states, she continued her weekly radio show.

Mrs. Pittman was a board member for many years of the Oakland YWCA and belonged to numerous civic organizations.

Mrs. Pittman is survived by three sisters, Clarice Isaacs of Berkeley and Eugenia Greene and Faricita Wyatt of Oakland.

The memorial service will be at 3:30 p.m. at the Hudson-Fuche Funeral Home, 3665 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland. Donations in Mrs. Pittman's name may be made to local branches of the NAACP.

— Clarence Johnson

All uses of this manuscript are covered by a legal agreement between the Regents of the University of California and Tarea Hall Pittman, dated 5 July 1974. The manuscript is thereby made available for research purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley. No part of the manuscript may be quoted for publication without the written permission of the Director of The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley.

Requests for permission to quote for publication should be addressed to the Regional Oral History Office, 486 Library, and should include identification of the specific passages to be quoted, anticipated use of the passages, and identification of the user. The legal agreement with Tarea Hall Pittman requires that she be notified of the request and allowed thirty days in which to respond.

EARL WARREN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

(California, 1926-1953)

Interviews Completed by June, 1974

Single Interview Volumes

A. Wayne Amerson, Northern California and Its Challenge to a Negro in the Mid-1900's. 1974 With an introduction by Henry Ziesenhenne

C. L. Dellums, International President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Civil Rights Leader. 1973
With an introduction by Tarea Pittman

McIntyre Faries, California Republicans, 1934-1953. 1974

Richard Graves, Theoretician, Advocate, and Candidate in California State Government. 1973

Emily H. Huntington, A Career in Consumer Economics and Social Insurance. 1971.
With an introduction by Charles A. Gulick, Professor of Economics, Emeritus.

Helen S. MacGregor, A Career in Public Service with Earl Warren. 1973
With an introduction by Earl Warren

Richard Allen McGee, Participant in the Evolution of American Corrections: 1931-1973. 1974

Donald McLaughlin, Careers in Mining Geology and Management, University Governance and Teaching. 1974

Tarea Pittman, NAACP Official and Civil Rights Worker. 1974
With an introduction by C.L. Dellums

Robert B. Powers, Law Enforcement, Race Relations: 1930-60. 1971

William Byron Rumford, Legislator for Fair Employment, Fair Housing, and Public Health. 1973
With an introduction by A. Wayne Amerson

Arthur H. Sherry, The Alameda County District Attorney's Office and the California Crime Commission. 1974
With an introduction by Ira M. Heyman, Professor of Law

Merrell F. Small, The Office of the Governor Under Earl Warren. 1972

Paul Schuster Taylor, California Social Scientist. 1973
Volume I, Education, Field Research, and Family.
With an introduction by Lawrence I. Hewes, Fellow, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Santa Barbara
Volume II in process.

Multi-Interview Volumes

California State Finance in the 1940's. 1974
With an introduction by Stanley Scott, Assistant Director, Institute of Governmental Studies
Fred Links, An Overview of the Department of Finance.
Ellis Groff, Some Details of Public Revenue and Expenditure in the 1940s.
George Killion, Observations on Culbert Olson, Earl Warren, and Money Matters in Public Affairs.
A. Alan Post, Watchdog on State Spending.
Paul Leake, Statement on the Board of Equalization.

Earl Warren's Bakersfield. 1971
Maryann Ashe and Ruth Smith Henley, Earl Warren's Bakersfield.
Omar Cavins, Coming of Age in Bakersfield.
Francis Vaughan, School Days in Bakersfield.
Ralph Kreiser, A Reporter Recollects the Warren Case.
Manford Martin and Ernest McMillan, On Methias Warren.

Earl Warren and Health Insurance: 1943-1949. 1971
Russel VanArsdale Lee, M.D., Pioneering in Prepaid Group Medicine.
Byrl R. Salsman, Shepherding Health Insurance Bills Through the California Legislature.
Gordon Claycombe, The Making of a Legislative Committee Study.
John W. Cline, M.D., California Medical Association Crusade Against Compulsory State Health Insurance.

Earl Warren and the State Department of Mental Hygiene. 1973
Frank F. Tallman, M.D., Dynamics of Change in State Mental Institutions.
Portia Bell Hume, M.D., Mother of Community Mental Health Services.

Earl Warren and the State Department of Public Health. 1973
With an introduction by E.S. Rogers, M.D., Dean, UC School of Public Health, 1946-51.
Malcolm H. Merrill, M.D., M.P.H., A Director Reminisces.
Frank M. Stead, Environmental Pollution Control.
Henry Ongerth, Recollections of the Bureau of Sanitary Engineering.
Kent A. Zimmerman, M.D., Mental Health Concepts.
Lawrence Arnstein, Public Health Advocates and Issues.

The Governor and the Public, the Press, and the Legislature. 1973

Marguerite Gallagher, Administrative Procedures in Earl Warren's Office, 1938-1953.

Verne Scoggins, Observations on California Affairs by Governor Earl Warren's Press Secretary.

Beach Vasey, Governor Warren and the Legislature.

The Japanese-American Relocation Reviewed. 1974

With an introduction by Mike M. Masaoka, Former National Secretary and Washington Representative, Japanese American Citizens League.

Volume I Decision and Exodus (In process)

Volume II The Internment

Robert B. Cozzens, Assistant National Director of the War Relocation Authority.

Dillon S. Myer, War Relocation Authority: The Director's Account.

Ruth W. Kingman, The Fair Play Committee and Citizen Participation.

Hisako Hibi, paintings of Tanforan and Topaz camps.

Labor Looks at Earl Warren. 1970

Germaine Bulcke, A Longshoreman's Observations.

Joseph Chaudet, A Printer's View.

Paul Heide, A Warehouseman's Reminiscences.

U.S. Simonds, A Carpenter's Comments.

Ernest H. Vernon, A Machinist's Recollections.

Perspectives on the Alameda County District Attorney's Office. 1972

With an introduction by Arthur H. Sherry, Professor of Law

Volume I

John F. Mullins, How Earl Warren Became District Attorney.

Edith Balaban, Reminiscences about Nathan Harry Miller, Deputy District Attorney, Alameda County.

Judge Oliver D. Hamlin, Reminiscences about the Alameda County District Attorney's Office in the 1920's and 30's.

Mary Shaw, Perspectives of a Newspaperwoman.

Willard W. Shea, Recollections of Alameda County's First Public Defender.

Volume II

Richard Chamberlain, Reminiscences about the Alameda County District Attorney's Office.

Lloyd Jester, Reminiscences of an Inspector in the District Attorney's Office.

Beverly Heinrichs, Reminiscences of a Secretary in the District Attorney's Office.

Clarence Severin, Chief Clerk in the Alameda County District Attorney's Office.

Homer R. Spence, Attorney, Legislator, and Judge.

E.A. Daly, Alameda County Political Leader and Journalist.

John Bruce, A Reporter Remembers Earl Warren.

Volume III

J. Frank Coakley, A Career in the Alameda County District Attorney's Office.

Albert E. Hederman, Jr., From Office Boy to Assistant District Attorney.

Lowell Jensen, Reflections of the Alameda County District Attorney.

James H. Oakley, Early Life of a Warren Assistant.

TABLE OF CONTENTS - Tarea Hall Pittman

PREFACE

INTRODUCTION by C.L. Dellums

INTERVIEW HISTORY

I	EARLY LIFE IN BAKERSFIELD	1
II	COLLEGE YEARS	20
III	WORK IN SOCIAL WELFARE	37
IV	CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COLORED WOMEN'S CLUBS	48
V	THE CALIFORNIA COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN	55
VI	ALAMEDA COUNTY GRAND JURY, 1947	62
VII	EARLY WORK IN THE NAACP	66
VIII	THE NEGRO EDUCATIONAL COUNCIL: NEGROES IN THE NEWS	79
IX	FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES LEGISLATION IN CALIFORNIA	86
X	FAIR HOUSING LEGISLATION	122
XI	NAACP WEST COAST REGIONAL DIRECTOR, 1961	126

INDEX 153

PREFACE

The Earl Warren Oral History Project, a five-year project of the Regional Oral History Office, was inaugurated in 1969 to produce tape-recorded interviews with persons prominent in the arenas of politics, governmental administration, and criminal justice during the Warren Era in California. Focusing on the years 1925-1953, the interviews were designed not only to document the life of Chief Justice Warren but to gain new information on the social and political changes of a state in the throes of a depression, then a war, then a postwar boom.

An effort was made to document the most significant events and trends by interviews with key participants who spoke from diverse vantage points. Most were queried on the one or two topics in which they were primarily involved; a few interviewees with special continuity and breadth of experience were asked to discuss a multiplicity of subjects. While the cut-off date of the period studied was October, 1953--Earl Warren's departure for the United States Supreme Court--there was no attempt to end an interview perfunctorily when the narrator's account had to go beyond that date in order to complete the topic.

The interviews have stimulated the deposit of Warreniana in the form of papers from friends, aides, and the opposition; government documents; old movie newsreels; video tapes; and photographs. This Earl Warren collection is being added to The Bancroft Library's extensive holdings on twentieth century California politics and history.

The project has been financed by four outright grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and by gifts from local donors which were matched by the Endowment. Contributors include the former law clerks of Chief Justice Earl Warren, the Cortez Society, many long-time supporters of "the Chief," and friends and colleagues of some of the major memoirists in the project. The Roscoe and Margaret Oakes Foundation and the San Francisco Foundation have jointly sponsored the Northern California Negro Political History Series, a unit of the Earl Warren Project.

Particular thanks are due the Friends of The Bancroft Library, who were instrumental in raising local funds for matching, who served as custodian for all such funds, and who then supplemented from their own treasury all local contributions on a one-dollar-for-every-three dollars basis.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical intervies with persons prominent in the history of California and the West. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library.

Amelia R. Fry, Director
Earl Warren Oral History Project

Willa K. Baum, Department Head
Regional Oral History Office

1 March 1973
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

EARL WARREN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Principal Investigators

Ira M. Heyman
Lawrence A. Harper
Arthur H. Sherry

Advisory Council

Barbara Nachtrieb Armstrong
Walton E. Bean
Richard M. Buxbaum
William R. Dennes
Joseph P. Harris
James D. Hart
John D. Hicks*
William J. Hill
Robert Kenny
Adrian A. Kragen
Thomas Kuchel
Eugene C. Lee
Mary Ellen Leary
James R. Leiby
Helen McGregor
Dean E. McHenry
Sheldon H. Messinger
Frank C. Newman
Allan Nevins*
Warren Olney, III
Bruce Poyer
Sho Sato
Mortimer Schwartz
Merrell F. Small
John D. Weaver

Project Interviewers

Miriam Feingold
Amelia R. Fry
Joyce A. Henderson
Rosemary Levenson
Gabrielle Morris

Special Interviewers

Orville Armstrong
Willa K. Baum
Malca Chall
June Hogan
Frank Jones
Alice G. King
Elizabeth Kirby
Harriet Nathan
Suzanne Riess
Ruth Teiser

*Deceased during the term of the project.

INTRODUCTION

As I recall, I first met Mrs. Pittman, "Ty," as she is known, in the early 1930s, and was immediately impressed by her dynamic and magnetic personality. As the years went by, we began to work together in what was known at the time as the Northern California Branch, NAACP. After San Francisco built a branch, the name of Northern California Branch was changed to Alameda County Branch. Some used to say that the Branch was run by Walter Gordon, Tarea Pittman, and C.L. Dellums. At one time, Tarea Pittman became the best known Negro woman in California. She was the head of the best known of the Negro Women's Clubs, and noted for her speaking ability and her ability to arouse and sway an audience. I would classify her speeches as non-violent militancy. When I became President of the Alameda County Branch of the Association, I appointed Ty Chairman of the Membership Committee. By then we had become the very closest of friends, and every year she continued to head the membership drive for me. Together we built the membership from approximately 350 to 3,500 by the end of our regime. The Negro population was less than twenty-five percent of what it is now.

After Franklin S. Williams came out from the East as the Director of the West Coast Region of the NAACP, he turned to Ty Pittman as one of the local leaders to help him build up the region. Within a very few years, and largely through her guidance and support, the West Coast Region became in many ways the strongest region in the Association. After a few years she was persuaded to accept a position as a Regional Field Secretary, really an assistant to Director Franklin Williams, and in that capacity she played a major part in building the Region, and helping to set up an entirely new regional structure. The Region was divided into five Area Conferences or Branches. After Mr. Williams left, Ty was the unanimous choice for the Region's leadership as Williams' successor. She was the Regional Director until a new department of the Association was set up by the National Office, known as Special Contribution Fund for the West Coast. When the National Office was seeking someone to head that Department in the West Coast Region, Mrs. Pittman of course was the unanimous choice to head that Department. She held this position until she decided to retire from full time work.

In the mid-thirties A. Philip Randolph organized the National Negro Congress. Mrs. Pittman was one of the leaders in helping to organize the Congress on the West Coast, and was one of the Officers in the East Bay

Chapter. The National Negro Congress convened in Chicago on February 14th, 15th, and 16th, 1936, for its First National Convention. Ty Pittman attended that session of the Congress, and served as one of the two California delegates on the General Resolutions Committee.

The local chapter of the Congress decided to purchase time on a local radio station for a news program, because at that time the commercial press seldom had anything in them about Negroes, other than criminals. Most newspapers didn't even capitalize the word Negro. The Congress made an arrangement with a local radio station, now known as KDIA, and started putting on a Sunday morning program, known as, "Negroes in the News." After a brief period of time the Congress decided to give up the broadcast, so Mrs. Pittman and four others of us formed the Negro Educational Council of the East Bay, and continued to sponsor the broadcast. Ty had been chosen as the commentator for the program by the Congress, and when the Negro Educational Council took over the program, Ty was continued as the commentator, and I am quite sure that she is the senior continuous newscaster in the nation.

I have never known anyone with more energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to any cause that Ty believed in and participated in.

C.L. Dellums

12 April 1973
Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters
Pacific Coast Headquarters
1716 Seventh Street
Oakland, California 94607

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Tarea Hall Pittman was interviewed as a part of the Earl Warren Oral History Project and its sub-series, Northern California Negro Political Leaders. A tireless worker for civil rights, she was the West Coast Regional Director for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People from 1959 to 1967. Her papers are housed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

Interviewer: Joyce Henderson, Negro history specialist for the Earl Warren Oral History Project.

Conduct of the Interview: The interview lasted seven sessions, taking place on May 20, June 10, August 25, and October 21 of 1971, and on February 24, June 17, and December 2 of 1972 in Mrs. Pittman's home, 2930 Grove Street, Berkeley. Taping was interrupted by the frequent traveling Mrs. Pittman did as fund developer for the western region of the Opportunity Industrial Centers. She joined the OIC staff in 1971.

Editing: The interview was edited by Joyce Henderson and sent to Mrs. Pittman for further emending. Here again, work on the manuscript went slowly because of Mrs. Pittman's work with OIC. In an effort to compensate for the delay, Mrs. Pittman not only edited the manuscript, but also had it final-typed by her sister, Clarice Isaacs. Mrs. Pittman also wrote the introduction to the C.L. Dellums interview.

Joyce A. Henderson
Interviewer-Editor

2 January 1974
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

Transcribed Rough Draft Edited by Tarea Pittman and Retyped by Clarice Isaacs, December, 1973.

TAREA PITTMAN, INTERVIEW #1

May 20, 1971

Joyce Henderson, Interviewer

I. Early Life in Bakersfield

Henderson: Were your parents pioneers to California?

Pittman: Well, the California pioneers are considered to be people that came in the covered wagons in the days of '49. My parents were not pioneers of that nature. However, some of the families who were among the first Negro settlers in various parts of the state are considered pioneer families. Mine was a pioneer family to the lower San Joaquin Valley of California in the Bakersfield area because they were among some of the first Negro settlers to come to that area.

My mother's name was Susie Pinkney. My father's name was William Hall.

Pittman: Although it is true that my father was among the brothers that started the Bakersfield Branch of the N A A C P, his brother, Mansion Hall, was the leader of the brothers that organized it. If we were to single out any one of the Hall brothers that was the person who had the most to do with it, it would be Mansion Hall. My father, William, with his brothers Mansion, Doyle, Jack and Bud founded the Branch. But Mansion Hall really was the one who took the leadership role. He became the first President of the Bakersfield Branch, N A A C P; he did much of the original correspondence.

Pittman: My father and his brothers were all farmers together and they were all expert farmers. They had been trained so that their crops were superb.

Henderson: How were they trained?

Pittman: Well, you see, their father had been a farmer. He was also a blacksmith who worked at farming before they left Alabama. But you see the principal crop that they had in Alabama was cotton and they thought that cotton would not grow in California. They were not accustomed to irrigating in Alabama. They knew nothing about irrigating, and the first crops they planted in Bakersfield perished, because in the first place, they had been sold a piece of property that was not on what they call the water right. So they had no way to get water. They didn't know it wasn't going to rain in California like it rained throughout the growing season in the South. So their first crops perished.

Then they bought another ranch which was a fertile, beautiful ranch right on a big canal, and they had plenty of water. The ranch was in the countryside, outside the city of Bakersfield on the south. All their crops then did well. When the brothers got older they went out and worked for Miller and Lux, huge land developers. Miller was the multi-millionaire who owned thousands and thousands of acres in that section of California. While working for Miller and Lux some of the brothers became foremen for the farms. Of course in this way, they learned many,many things about farming that perhaps on a small acreage they never would have learned. So I imagine that much of their knowledge

Pittman: of farming they learned from working on this big acreage for Miller and Lux. Either Miller or Lux, one or the other of them, was a Scotchman, but I am not sure which one. Anyway, they had this extensive acreage.

Henderson: Your father and uncles worked for them while they were young men?

Pittman: Yes. Before they settled down to serious farming of their own and had their own ranches per se, they worked both for their father and for Miller and Lux.

Henderson: Your father met your mother after he got to California?

Pittman: Yes. My mother's family was in Bakersfield first. They had come before the Hall family arrived. The Pinkneys, my mother's family, came from South Carolina in 1882 and the Halls, my father's family, came from Alabama in 1895.

My mother was orphaned at an early age. She had five brothers and she was the only girl and the baby of the family. There were six of them -- brothers Benjamin, Henry, John, Joseph, Pete and Susie.

It is so interesting to know what happened to children that were orphaned then. It is just amazing how California grew into a state and into cities, with organized agencies. At the time my mother was a little girl, there were no orphanages or institutions that took children. Just whoever was around would take one or more of them. Consequently, a different person had every one of the Pinkney children, and my mother, Susie, had a foster mother, Mrs. Fannie Reese, who reared her and was really quite cruel to her in a way.

Pittman: Mrs. Reese had a son of her own, Jerome Price, who was probably fourteen or fifteen years older than my mother. He was a big teenager and my mother just a little tot.

Jerome Price became a very interesting man. He was practically a linguist because there were a large number of Mexicans living in Bakersfield and he learned to speak Spanish fluently. These people were not Spaniards but Mexicans from Mexico. He also learned to speak Chinese in several dialects because there were quite a number of Chinese living in Bakersfield. Jerome Price also became an entertainer, and, in later years, entertained on San Francisco's Barbary Coast where his knowledge of the Chinese language proved very useful.

People were very cruel to Mexicans. My mother said she would be so frightened because sometimes she'd go out and she'd look up in a tree and a Mexican would be hanging there. Oh, they just hanged Mexicans at will. They had no rights. They were very cruel to Mexicans during these early days.

The other thing that frightened my mother very much was that it was a time when there were many desperadoes in California. I think that Jesse James and the Dalton brothers were in this area. Tracy was also one of the desperadoes in this area. They named the city of Tracy after him but he was a terrible desperado.

Mrs. Reese was a widow, so there was not a man in the house except her son, and Mrs. Reese was very afraid. So when there

Pittman: would be a knock on the door she would say to my mother, "Go to the door, Susie." My mother said she'd be so frightened because they would almost be sure it was a desperado! She would open the door and sometimes it would be robbers, and they would come in. What they always wanted was a fresh horse and something to eat, and then they would be on their way. They'd be moving fast because the sheriffs would be after them. Oh, my mother said they just lived in terror because it was such a wild country and things were so bad! It was just terrible.

Henderson: Had it changed very much by the time that you were a little girl?

Pittman: Oh, yes. Things had taken form; the desperadoes were gone and there was a city. There was a city police department, a fire department. Things had become organized but it is interesting to know how things really did come together in that length of time. The vigilantes had disappeared and in their stead there were city officers and supervisors.

Now the schools did pretty well at the time my mother was a little girl. Some of the schools had teachers that were teaching three or four different grades in the country school out where my father was. They just had, I think, either two or three teachers in the wole school. But they didn't have many pupils either; they had maybe forty or fifty pupils in the entire school. At some of the schools there was only one teacher and she had to teach all of the grades. But the schools were progressing.

Pittman: By the time I got to high school, we had a big Union High School. When I hear people talking about busing, this is very interesting to me because busing was the thing that brought about the excellent educational opportunity that we had. All of us around the area in Kern County got together and formed a big Kern County Union High School at Bakersfield. The buses brought the students in every day from outlying areas and took them back at night.

Henderson: Was this the only high school?

Pittman: It was the only high school, a big union high school at that time. However, later on, the surrounding places got their own schools -- a Taft High School, a Wasco High School, a McFarland High School, a Maricopa High School, etc. All of these towns were originally sending their students in to Bakersfield, twenty, thirty and forty miles away. So it was a real opportunity, and because of this we had one of the biggest high schools in the state of California. Otherwise Bakersfield would have had just a tiny little high school. We were able to have every opportunity, all of the languages; all of the departments were advanced because of the school being a union high school. This is why we had such excellent instruction.

So when I hear people talking about busing and how bad it would be, I think this was our opportunity. Today in Bakersfield, since the city has grown so, there is a South High, a West High, a East High; altogether there are now eight high schools which have become offshoots of that one big union high school.

Henderson: Was there much prejudice against blacks at your high school in Bakersfield?

Pittman: Yes, we had some problems. We began to know that Southerners were very prejudiced. The people who came from the South were always making remarks that they didn't go to school with "niggers" where they came from and things like that. I remember an incident in my dance class. We were doing aesthetic dancing and so we had to pair off. We were doing some kind of arabesques. So this girl didn't want to take my hand because, you know, she didn't want to be "contaminated." I knew she didn't want to take my hand and dance with me as my partner because I was a Negro. The teacher found this out, also, and she said, "Well, you know that we have just one school and we have just one class. She was in this class and she could either choose to dance with everybody in the class or she would receive an "F" and be expelled from the class. And several of the girls - we had so many friends - just thought this was terrible that this girl didn't want to dance with me. The other girls said:

"Oh, we want to be Tarea's partner!"

"Oh, let us be her partner!"

The teacher, of course, after she had told this girl that she could do one or the other of these things, did allow one of the other girls, who asked, to be my partner. Then this girl who had refused to dance with me was just sitting off, I remember all alone. She was so forlorn. We called them at that time "poor white trash." She was sitting off in the corner; she didn't have any friends.

Pittman: Then they began to just pressure her every place she went. She was in other classes, too. She just got ostracized.

Henderson: Would you say that the "poor white trash" were socially inferior to the established Negro families?

Pittman: Oh, I don't think there was any question about it because we all had friends. Not only that, we "belonged" and they did not. It was just like anything else. You see, we already had our place. Many of the parents of those students that were there at that school had been classmates of our mother and father. My parents knew all of the people in town. They grew up with the town. When my dad went into the bank the bankers and tellers would say, "Why, hello, Will. How are you?" They all knew him intimately. The white Southerners came to Bakersfield and, in the first place, they were going to have a difficult time anyway because they were new. Then, they had a Southern accent and people didn't have Southern accents - not very many at that time. There weren't too many people who came with a Southern accent. Some of them who came were poorly clad; they were not well-dressed. By the time my mother and father were married they were able to build a home and we had a nice house and we had things that everybody else had. So we were not depressed in any way.

Because my mother's parents had died, she and her brothers had a difficult time. They were scattered around in foster families. There was a big, big stable in Bakersfield. It was a big breeding and horse-racing stable that was called Baldwin's stable, I think.

Pittman: The boys in mother's family went to work at the stables. This was where boys could work. Well, you know the child labor laws wouldn't allow that now. But they did then and one of my mother's brothers, Pete Pinkney, became one of the first Negro jockeys. He was a small fellow. All the rest of the Pinkneys were big people. My other uncles were big men. My Uncle Ben was 6' 2". But this little fellow, Pete Pinkney, was small and I imagine that he probably was small because he got stunted riding those horses. He was the youngest of the five brothers.

One of the brothers, Benjaman Pinkney, was a stable boy and followed the horses to Chicago. He was the groom and he went with the horses and never came back to California for many years. My mother did not see that brother, her oldest brother, from the time she was a little girl about six or seven years old until he returned years later. When he returned four of us had been born. There was Eugenia, myself, Marcus and Clarice. We were all stair-steps, and we were all little children when he came back to California. Later he went into the army and became an officer in the 8th Illinois Regiment (you know, it was a very famous Negro regiment). They were on duty at the Mexican border and then went abroad in World War I. He was a Captain in the 8th Illinois Regiment. But all this he just sort of taught himself. Well, my uncles went to school now and then. There were no laws at that time that said you were required to go to school. Now my mother, being with Mrs. Fannie Reese, went to school regularly every day, but her brothers didn't.

Pittman: Henry Pinkney, my mother's second oldest brother, became a vaquero in the Tehachapi Mountains which are about thirty-five or forty miles outside of Bakersfield. He was a real cowboy and hearded cattle throughout the Tehachapi area. When he was older he took up a big cattle ranch and had his own brand. He would come down to town every now and then. Then finally, of course, he came to the city and just remained. He lived in Bakersfield and worked there. He was employed in the street department of the city of Bakersfield until he retired. Then he took up a section of land and had a cabin and some cattle, and went back and forth from his cabin to town. We went regularly to his cabin in the Tehachapi Mountains. He knew all of that section of the mountains from boyhood.

Another brother, Joseph Pinkney, was a trainer of horses. He trained the trotters, so he was connected with the stable.

On the other hand, after my father's mother and father came to California they were completely stable with their family. The thirteen sons and daughters of the Halls came to California with their mother and father and lived with them until they married and left. My father's mother, you see, lived to be a very elderly woman and she was always the matriarch of that family. They had a terrible time trying to get her to come off that ranch after she was in her 80's. They just had to prevail. She lived to be 97 years of age. At 80 my grandmother was absolutely a phenomenal woman. At

Pittman: 85 she could just get out and walk to downtown Bakersfield and back better than I could ever think about doing now. She lived the latter part of her life in Bakersfield.

Henderson: What was her name?

Pittman: Her name was Jane Hall. Oh, Jane Hall was something else! My goodness! The Hall family was a very fair family, some with straight blonde hair, and blue eyes;others of them, like my father, looked more Indian or Mexican. My grandmother herself was a fair woman who had brown hair and blue eyes. She was a small woman but, oh, she was indestructible. She was something else. She was a very, very strict disciplinarian and wanted everything just so; she was exacting, very talkative. The Halls were very talkative. I come from a family of great talkers. My uncle, Mansion Hall, would make speeches, very fiery talks about anything that he was going to talk on. He was a very fiery speaker and my father also; all of them were.

Also, the Pinkneys, my mother's family, were great talkers. My mother was quieter than any of the rest of them. Not that that she didn't talk a good deal. She believed in very strict discipline. We had things that we were supposed to do. She had a well-ordered, well-run household. We knew exactly what we were to do and we did it! She saw to it. My father would be out on the ranch. My mother was a very capable woman and did a lot of things in running the household.

Henderson: Do you remember whether your parents ever talked about the Methias Warren family?

Pittman: Our uncles knew the Warren family well. Methias Warren lived over in East Bakersfield, and the Halls and the Pinkneys both knew him. They knew him very well. If I am not mistaken, I think he worked for the railroad at the roundhouse.

Earl Warren came up through Bakersfield High School but he had graduated by the time my contemporaries came along. He had come to Cal before we were in high school or anything. So he had gone and we didn't know him as a lad, or as a person around Bakersfield. I believe for the most part he remained in the Bay Area after he graduated and while he was in college. He was a contemporary of Walter Gordon, and, of course, Walt knew him very, very well, even on campus.

Henderson: Did your uncles ever voice an opinion about Methias Warren?

Pittman: No. I don't remember talking to them much about him, except they said they knew him.

Henderson: Was Methias a leader in the community?

Pittman: I don't think so. No.

I tell you one thing I do know. Many of the people became very, very rich by someone in their family taking up a lot of cheap land which became very, very valuable, or they took up part of the oil fields.

Now my grandparents came here and settled in the oil fields, but they thought, "We've been stung." My grandfather was a farmer and he was looking for farm land. This land that became the oil fields was just sage brush, jack rabbits, rattlesnakes, tarantulas and spiders. So they found out that they were out

Pittman: there on the plains - no water out there. But that became the oil fields. They had a whole half a section of land!

Henderson: That was the farm they left?

Pittman: Yes, then they went on and took up a very valuable farm. But other people bought the oil fields and became immensely rich.

The Warren family was very, very poor. The were not the prominent people in town who were merchants or who had land holdings. The only one of my father's primary family who is still living is my aunt, his youngest sister, Anna Austin. I don't know whether Aunt Anna would know much about or remember the Warren family. The brothers knew more than she did about the people in town. She knew them, too, but she didn't seem to have the contact with the ongoing people in town the way her brothers did, especially Uncle Mansion. He was, I presume, the most prosperous of the Hall brothers. He took up an additional section of land after his family was almost grown. It was a very prosperous undertaking. So, he had two ranches. By this time, he wasn't working very much himself on the ranch. Most of it he was having all hired people work. He was free to move around and went to the big meetings of the cooperative that ran the cotton gin, and this kind of thing. He became more affluent than any of his other brothers. He was doing things in the town civically and knew a lot of people. Uncle Mansion and one of his nephews, Thomas Reese, farmed together for a while. Later the nephew moved to the city of Bakersfield and was very prominent.

Pittman: He would have known the Warrens. He died a few years ago. Uncle Mansion has been dead about five years. My mother's brothers have passed on, too.

We were very remiss that we didn't get down most of this history from them in written records of what happened and their whole background.

Henderson: It is quite a background! Now, you said that the Warrens lived in East Bakersfield?

Pittman: Well, that is the way I remember it; they lived in East Bakersfield and were a very poor family.

Henderson: What was the name of the part of town that you lived in?

Pittman: We lived in Bakersfield proper. We lived on Chester Avenue which was the main street of the town and still is the center of town. We lived a couple of blocks outside the city limits on South Chester Avenue.

Henderson: Were the Negro families interspersed throughout all parts of the city?

Pittman: At that time they were living all over the city spotted about, checkerboarded around the city.

Henderson: Was there much discrimination against Negroes in Bakersfield?

Pittman: It was a very, very prejudiced place. It was terrible. You didn't have problems in connection with receiving your schooling; there was no problem in going to school. There was no problem in getting jobs in certain areas. But you couldn't get a job as a clerk in a store or a secretary in an office. None of these jobs were open to Negroes. Domestic work was available to

Pittman: women. The men could get work with the railroads because Bakersfield was a division headquarters for the big railroads, Santa Fe and Southern Pacific, and they had big shops there. The Santa Fe had a big roundhouse and the Southern Pacific had a huge operation going there. This was the source of work for men, as well as opportunities to work on farms because Bakersfield was also a big farming area. But the primary employers of Negro men in Bakersfield were the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe railroads in their big shops. Then there were a few Negroes, like Uncle Henry, who worked for the city. He worked for the street department of the city where they would be grading and doing other things that kept up the streets. There were only a few people like this.

Most of the people who were train porters or waiters were not coming out of Bakersfield. They were coming out of San Francisco, Oakland, Fresno or Los Angeles. The trains ran as far as Fresno and went back or they went on through to Los Angeles.

Henderson: The railroads weren't interested in hiring the Negro men in Bakersfield as porters?

Pittman: They were, but the porters and waiters were already on the trains when they arrived in Bakersfield, the crews having boarded the trains where they originated. So, the men in Bakersfield were working for the railroad but not running on the road as porters or waiters because of the way the trains were run.

Then, of course, as far back as I can remember, we always had some big barber shops. Some of them operated by the old Southern pattern - they catered only to white people.

Pittman: The biggest barber shop there cut only white people's hair for years and years.

Henderson: You mean the black barbers were discriminating against blacks?

Pittman: The Negro barbers! It was a barber shop for white people only! Oh, we had a lot of barber shops. But Houston's barber shop was at one time the biggest shop in Bakersfield, white or black, and they'd cut nothing but white people's hair. Then, of course, we had other barber shops that cut everybody's hair.

Henderson: Shall we talk now about your brother and sisters? I believe the oldest is named Eugenia Greene.

Pittman: Yes. She was always very much interested in clerical skills and she and my sister, Clarice, even in high school, were in the Commercial Department. They received awards for excellence in typing, bookkeeping and shorthand, even in their high school days. They were leaning toward, and had skills, that finally led them both into being secretaries.

My sister, Eugenia, was very musical and played the piano from a very early age, and at one time organized an orchestra. She played for various dance groups in and around Bakersfield for quite some time and did very well at it. Then finally, after she married, her husband took a rather dim view of her being in the orchestra because they would go to places like Taft and Fresno that were maybe fifty or one hundred miles away to play for dances. Her husband didn't take too much to that. So finally she gave up the orchestra. She was to

Pittman: come to Cal with me, but the fall that we were to come up here she got married. So then she didn't come. She stayed in Bakersfield, and as I say, she continued to play to an extent with the orchestra, but not as much as she had before.

When her husband died, she came to Berkeley, too, and worked at several things. She finally went to the University and became a secretary in the College of Engineering. She was secretary for our Alameda County Branch of the NAACP for a number of years, then for our Berkeley Branch of the NAACP for four or five years at least. She was very much interested in the NAACP and civil rights, as I was.

Henderson: I was thinking that your brother and a sister had musical inclinations, Marcus and Eugenia. Do you know what side of the family it comes from?

Pittman: Yes. It came from my mother's side. My mother played the piano and sang. She was quite an accomplished musician. She didn't play abroad or anything, but she was the organist of the church, Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Bakersfield.

My sister, Clarice, married Lloyd Isaacs and later moved with him to Austin, Texas, Chicago, Illinois and finally to Tuskegee Institute, Alabama where her husband was Treasurer of the school for fifteen years. Clarice taught commercial subjects while at Tuskegee Institute and returned to Berkeley in 1950 after the tragic death of her husband in 1948. She is an Office Supervisor in the School of Social Welfare at U.C., Berkeley, and will be retiring in June, 1973 after twenty-two years with the School.

Henderson: Was your sister, Faricita, writing as early as her high school days?

Pittman: By the time my sisters,Faricita and June, had come along, the four older ones of us had gone to Kern County Union High School and graduated from there. But Faricita and June, my two younger sisters, went to Junior High School and graduated from Berkeley High School here. We all had come to Berkeley before they were high school age. My mother's health wasn't good. So she moved here because the doctor had said that she could not remain in Bakersfield in that climate. She lived here until she died going back to Bakersfield periodically where my father was still farming.

Then Faricita went to and graduated from San Jose State College. Her majors were then voice and dramatics. But I don't really think that she did too much writing until she went East. After graduating from San Jose State, she went to Columbia University in New York City to do graduate work. Then from there she enlisted in the Womens Army Corps and went to officer's training school in Des Moines, Iowa after which,as a Captai she was a recruiting officer in the New York area during her stay in the WAC. When they were taking women overseas during World War II, she didn't want to go overseas. So she came out of the service and came back home to Berkeley.

She would probably have to say when she first began writing, but I think that she started writing more or less after she left her undergraduate work. I think she started writing during the time she was at Columbia University.

Henderson: What are come of the titles of Faricita's writings?

Pittman: The River Must Flow, A Book of Poems, printed by Lawton and Kennedy, San Francisco, 1965.

"I've Paid My Dues" - A one act play.

"A Collection of Verse"

June, our youngest sister, married and now lives in San Diego. She is a teacher in the San Diego school system and is married to Orlando Saunders.

Henderson: Did Marcus attend high school in Bakersfield?

Pittman: Yes, he did. He came away from Kern County Union High School in his senior year and actually graduated from Polytechnic High School in San Francisco. Then he became very much interested in music and instead of going on to college and finishing in California, he went abroad and studied in London and in Paris.

Henderson: Was it on a scholarship?

Pittman: He was a protege of Roland Hayes and that meant that Roland Hayes presented him and gave him a scholarship because he paid for his musical education. I can't remember when Roland Hayes first heard Marcus sing. But there was another sort of patron of the arts whose name, and he was very well-known, was Noel Sullivan of San Francisco. He was a member of the Phelan family. The Phelan Building is named for them in San Francisco. Phelan was one of the big financiers. Noel Sullivan was a nephew of the Phelans. They were sort of patrons of the arts. Noel Sullivan was very much interested in Marcus' singing. I don't know where Noel Sullivan first heard Marcus sing, but he became very, very much interested in him also.

II. College Years

Henderson: What was your main motivation in coming to Berkeley? Was it mainly to go to school?

Pittman: Yes. I was intent on going to college. I took a college preparatory course in high school. From the first day I went to high school I was intent on going to college. And I wanted to come to Berkeley. I didn't want to go to the University of California, Los Angeles or to the University of Southern California.

Henderson: Why not?

Pittman: Well, for some reason, I didn't want to go to Los Angeles. I hadn't been to Berkeley but about two or three times. But you see I had been to Los Angeles quite a bit. My father had a sister who went to live there. When we went on vacations, we went to see her because we were only 126 miles from Los Angeles. You see, we were no distance from Los Angeles. I mean, at that time, Berkeley was a long way away. It was so far away that my mother did not want me to go to Berkeley.

Henderson: Well, how did you persuade your parents?

Pittman: Well, I just kept at it. I just kept worrying them about wanting to come here. I kept saying: "Oh, but I want to go." Then we had three Negro students from Kern County Union High School who were a little ahead of me who came to Berkeley. That probably influenced my parents' decision to let me come.

TAREA PITTMAN INTERVIEW #2 (June 10, 1971)
And
INTERVIEW #6 (June 13, 1972)

Joyce Henderson, Interviewer

Henderson: Did you have any problems finding housing when you came to Berkeley in 1923?

Pittman: There was very little housing to be had. In fact, the only housing that was available for Negro students was in private homes and there were not very many of them, nor were they too close to the campus which created a problem.

Some male students got food and lodging at the frat houses where they worked. This was a source of some small income. Mostly, however, it concerned room and board and they either waited table or washed dishes in the fraternity houses. So they stayed there in the big white fraternity houses. This was a way that they could get housing and their food without cost.

Henderson: What about the white sorority houses?

Pittman: White sorority houses didn't have Negro girls working in them. A lot of them had Negro cooks.

Henderson: Who did you live with?

Pittman: I lived with Alice Osborne, mother of Vivian Osborne Marsh.

Henderson: Did your parents know her before?

Pittman: No, we did not know her. One of the students from Kern County Union High School who preceded me to Berkeley inquired to see who might have a place, and this is how I landed at Mrs. Alice Osborne's home. It was just inadvertent in that I had never

Pittman: heard of her; no one in my family had heard of her or knew her, and this was just a completely new contact for me. I did live there until my mother who was ill came to Berkeley from Bakersfield to live. My mother had to leave the San Joaquin Valley because they suspected that she had that San Joaquin Valley fever, and they wanted her out of the valley because she wasn't very well. So because she had three children up here in school by this time she decided that she would move here. That way she could bring the two younger children with her who were still at home. One of my sisters was married and the others of us were here - my brother, Marcus, my sister, Clarice, and I. So my mother came north to Berkeley in 1925.

Henderson: Just a couple of years after you had?

Pittman: Yes, so those first two years I lived at Mrs. Osborne's home.

Henderson: I read that the YWCA was an organization that put its arms around girls coming up to the University, and that the workers made friends with them very easily. Did you find that to be true?

Pittman: Well, we made friends very easily. The YWCA cottage, as it was called at that time, right outside of Sather Gate on the University campus, was a meeting place for students at noon.There were parties and social events given there. It really was sort of a mecca for students, and Negro students were welcome to a certain degree. We probably didn't make as many contacts as the white students did, but I never remember feeling foreign there, like I wasn't wanted. It was the same with Stiles Hall which was the men's YMCA. It was over at Harmon Gymnasium at that time. It was

Pittman: just up about a block from the "Y" cottage. The fellows seemed to feel quite at home there. But you see, the YWCA didn't have any lodging at that time. So the question as to whether we could live there never came up, because it was just a small building. Of course I had come from Bakersfield and I didn't know what was adequate and what wasn't, but I can understand now that it was a small building and I guess it scarcely met the need of the social experience that they were trying to give young women.

The other place where we felt very much at home and had dances was Stephens Union. It was very new then. We thought it was the most! It was a very pleasant building, right there on Faculty Glade. We could go out and sit under the beautiful trees. I was entranced with the campus. It was so beautiful! Of course, you see, I had come from a very arid place, even though the agriculture was wonderful and we had a lot of fruit in certain areas, but adjacent to Bakersfield is arid land and the desert.

Henderson: Did you meet Ruth Kingman as early as 1923?

Pittman: Yes. I knew Ruth Kingman and I knew Harry, her husband. You know he was at Stiles for so long. And such a wonderful man! And oh, my friend, Carol Sibley, she's on the school board and was Miss YWCA herself. Carol Sibley was a very outstanding internationalist. From the beginning of my acquaintance with her she brought no kind of racial feeling in connection with her friendships. She was very active in the YWCA.

Henderson: She was some kind of officer?

Pittman: I don't remember what her official capacity was. But she and another woman were very active working with girl reserves or with the young women on the campus itself.

Pittman: Lucy Stebbins was the dean of women and she, too, was a very fine woman, in connection with her over-all view of having everyone have an opportunity. Whenever she was called upon to make a policy statement about any problem that had racial overtones, she was very just in what she had to say. Dean Lucy Stebbins just died a few years ago. I don't remember her ever looking too young. She was never married and was kind of a plain-looking woman, never very flashy. But she was very solid and sound. When you went to see her about anything you kind of had the idea that she wasn't very forceful because of the way she talked. She was calm, and she was deliberate and reserved. But if you mistook this for weakness, you were mistaken, because underneath this calm facade she was very positive, and had very concrete ideas. She didn't swerve from her principals or ideals at all.

When the Delta Sigma Theta sorority was founded, the University had an interfraternal council. Representatives from all of the women's and men's groups - even the boarding house groups - were on it. There were some very strong boarding house groups that were represented. They weren't fraternities or sororities, just big boarding houses and they went on from year to year. They had house officers and this kind of thing. They had to belong to this council in order to operate a boarding house and get campus recognition. Something arose that we couldn't be represented on this council, because you see we were just a poor group because there were so few of us.

Henderson: That was the Delta Sigma Theta Sorotity?

Pittman: That was the Delta Sigma Theta and Alpha Kappa Alpha sororities.

Henderson: I didn't see your group in the Blue and Gold among the pictures of the sororities and I was wondering if this was why?

Pittman: Well, we were recognized on campus. But you see those other groups were strong enough to be able to pay for those pages in the Blue and Gold and get the pictures taken. The first thing one had to do is get the pictures taken. For some of us our families were barely paying our tuition; we were paying it, but it was difficult. There were so few of us in our sorority that we couldn't make up in number what we lacked. It couldn't be: "Well, we've got fifty students so everybody can pay a dollar and we can get the pictures taken and get them in the Blue and Gold." We didn't have but just a handful of people.

Henderson: What was the reason that the interfraternal council didn't allow you a spot?

Pittman: Well, it was just plain prejudice! Most times the people who discriminate do not wish to be identified as discriminating against you because of your race. Even back then they didn't want to say it was because of our race. They did it under the guise that we shouldn't be allowed to belong because we didn't have a house. See, we didn't have a fraternity house or a sorority house or a boarding house. We all lived out in the city, with the exception of the men that lived adjacent to campus. But they were working in the frat houses. Judge John Bussey lived at a frat house and

Pittman: waited on tables, and this is the way he earned his room and board. This is what any number of people did. My husband happened to be one who was working at the post office - one of not too many. My sister Clarice Isaacs' husband and my husband were the closest of close personal friends and both of them were working in the post office and going to college. How they ever did it, I don't know. My husband had untold stamina! Even as an older man today, he works extremely hard and he doesn't want to quit. He is still practicing dentistry. His eyesight is good; his hand is steady. So he doesn't want to retire. He says he is never going to retire.

So Dean Lucy Stebbins was very, very active during this controversy. She was the dean of women and she maintained that we were college women and that as long as our scholastic average was what it was supposed to be that we would have to be admitted. I forget who was the president of the University. Let me see, was Campbell the president at that time? Anyway, he came on pretty well.

Anyway, Dean Stebbins was very outspoken in her espousal of the Negro women on campus.

Henderson: Did the council ever open its doors to you?

Pittman: Oh, yes. We went again. We sent our representatives regularly.

Henderson: But at first they didn't.

Pittman: Oh no. They just said they didn't want us and told us that we couldn't belong and that we <u>shouldn't</u>. Then we went to Dean Stebbins, and she said, "Well, of course. You are a women's

Pittman: group. The fact that you haven't a house is not your fault."

I know that now, looking back, she realized that it was a big struggle for us to even be in school. But she didn't say this to us. She simply let them know. So then they made a policy, and there was a policy statement to the effect that if one did maintain the proper averages, then he would be allowed to become part of the interfraternal council.

Henderson: Could you give me some names of the early members of the Deltas?

Pittman: Well, of course, one of the founders was Vivian Osborne Marsh. There was a Marie Lennox, who was one of the first Negro women to work as a staff person with the YWCA. She had a tragic automobile accident. She was killed just as she alighted from the street car. A car ran over her and I think she was killed instantly. Talma Brooks was an early member. Let me see, was Aretha Tatum one of those early members, too? There was Gladys Brown; she was Gladys Davis at that time. Gladys Davis Brown lives in Oakland and is a piano teacher. There was also Louise Thompson and Angelesta Wren Grigsby. Louise Thompson was a very fair girl; and she was always having some kind of problem because you see she looked like a white person.

Henderson: What kind of problems did she have?

Pittman: Well, you see, she'd be in a group and somebody would probably say, "Well, I don't think these niggers ought to be here." She'd overhear this. What with her being so light and with straight hair and looking so Caucasian, she'd be inclined to take up the cudgel and say something about it, "What do you mean calling somebody nigger?" Well, I mean, she just had problems.

Pittman: A lot of fair-skinned Negroes have had a problem in reverse, you know. Then she had people that she felt were prejudiced against her because she was so fair.

Well, anyway, there were some others - not too many.

Mrs. Elsie Carrington Rumford and her sisters, Amy Carrington, who is a retired teacher, and Carolyn Carrington, also retired who live in Berkeley are AKA's. All these girls were AKA's with Ida Jackson, Lulu Chapman Goodrich and that group.

Henderson: You remember them pretty well considering all the time that has passed!

Henderson: When did you first meet your husband and where?

Pittman: I was in undergraduate school in the College of Letters and Science at the University of California, Berkeley and he was over in San Francisco at the University of California Dental School. I told you that there were just a handful of Negro students on campus. At the beginning of the semester, Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity had a party. It was kind of a rush party. It was at one of these welcoming parties, or I guess just a beginning first-of-school social event that I met my husband. He was among those present.

I didn't think he was that handsome, but a lot of the girls thought he was very handsome. He was, you know, very well-dressed and he had access to a car. Very few people had a car at that time.

There were also a group of fellows that were quite well-known, the Acorn Club. Some of these fellows became firemen, some went to work at insurance companies in San Francisco, others were

Pittman: working in the post office. They were a very outstanding group of young men. Then there was the club that I belong to now, Phyllis Wheatley Club, which had some very outstanding women as members. At first most of them were single women. They used to give dansants and dawn dances and other social events as well. But much more, it became a service club as the women got older. Members from groups like this, which were more or less established groups, were the groups associated with the students of the University of California.

But back to Dr. Pittman. He was born in Alabama. His uncle, Matthew Pittman, brought him to California before he started school out in the Melrose section of East Oakland, at 48th Avenue going toward San Leandro. He was reared in California and didn't really know anything about Alabama because he was only around two or three years old, something like that, when his uncle brought him to Oakland. His mother had died and they didn't know where his father went; he had abandoned the mother and baby in Birmingham, Alabama some time before. So the uncle who was living there at the time with his wife, Justina, and no children of their own, felt very badly that the father had gone off and abandoned this lovely baby boy. The uncle adopted him, moved to Oakland, and reared him as his own son. The father finally did show up and came to Oakland after Bill Pittman was about twelve or fourteen years old, I think almost high school age.

Pittman: His uncle and his wife called him "son" and he was indeed a son. His uncle took wonderful care of him and did wonderful things for him and they were very close until he died in 1940. The uncle had a car because he was quite well off, I mean for those times.

I've asked Bill a lot of times, "How at that time, when you didn't see any Negro dentists in Oakland, did you arrive at the fact that you were going to become a dentist?" He said, "Well, I knew --." He can't really explain why he chose dentistry. One just didn't pick that up in college. You know sometimes you're doing your undergrad work, and still don't know what you are going to be. But that was always his goal. I don't know how he knew. I've never been able to get him to explain this.

But anyway, his uncle had a car and whenever there was a party, or many times when there wasn't a party and it was just a weekend, he had the use of his uncle's car and we drove around the East Bay. The fellows who had the cars had a little extra status, you know. Then, on top of that, he had money to spend - above the average.

He was very tall, even as a teenager. He even put his age up during World War I and got in the Army. At that time you could go in and enlist and say, "I'm 21 years old." He was slender at the time and I don't know why when they looked at him they couldn't see he wasn't that old. His uncle said he could have stopped him, but there were a lot of older boys that he was with, he was the youngest one of the whole group, and all of them were going away to war and he got a fascination about it.

Pittman: He'd go down with these fellows when they enlisted, a lot of them, and just got carried away with this.

Henderson: Was he ever accepted?

Pittman: Yes. The army accepted him and put him in the service. His uncle said that he was so worried. He didn't realize that he was ever going to be sent over to France or he never would have let him enlist. But he thought, "I don't think I can keep him in school." There was just a kind of wave of people thinking that enlisting was so wonderful and everything. He went into the service and it threw him very late with his education because he had to come back and go to high school. He had just begun his freshman year before he left. But of course, he did do it. He should have never been in World War I! This was World War I! 1917! And you know, that was horrible.

Henderson: These people should have known better than to admit him.

Pittman: Oh, they didn't care. The recruiters were enlisting, taking people. They had no standards like they have now. They had been accused of being biased and not letting any Negroes enlist. So I guess they thought, "Well, we'll take one or two to prove that we aren't prejudiced." So they took Bill (my husband) and he went on up to Fort Lewis in Washington. The next thing you know they had sent him overseas. But anyway, he did get back and didn't get maimed or anything. He did get some mustard gas -- a rash like thing-- that gave him quite a time of it, because it would reoccur. This mustard gas was very bad. But other than that, he didn't get any bones broken, didn't get shot, and didn't lose an arm or leg.

Pittman: After returning from the army he worked in the post office during the summer. Then he found a way to continue to work on a swing shift so that he could go to school and continue to work. Well, this meant that he had more money than most of the fellows. Naturally that was very desirable to the girls.

Henderson: I can imagine how he would have been in demand. Well, when were you eventually married?

Pittman: Oh, I met him in 1923 and we married in 1927.

Henderson: Had you graduated?

Pittman: No, I hadn't graduated. You see, the University had told me that I was too underweight. I went down so far that I was 27 pounds underweight. They told me that I would have to gain that weight during the summer. You see, I was well, but I was too badly underweight. Looking back now, I guess maybe they thought I was susceptible to tuberculosis or something. At that time U.C. had hospitalization along with your registration. That entitled you to hospitalization and I guess that they just thought that I was just so dangerously thin that I was likely to become ill. They finally ended up making me stay out. So I stayed out a couple of semesters. Then when I finally came back, it was then that I changed my major. I had then decided that I would change my major.

Henderson: From English to what?

Pittman: I changed it from English to Education because I was in Education with an English major. I had an English Major with a minor in Philosophy and Anthropology. I had made up my mind that I would change.

Pittman: I think I told you that I was sent down to Prescott School in West Oakland where most of the Negro students were to do my student teaching. Those schools in the West Oakland area had more minority students, particularly Negroes, than any other schools in all of northern California. So they sent me down there to do my practice work. The boats were running to San Francisco and I had a lot of what we would call now, "disadvantaged children," and some of them had been born down there in West Oakland, but had never been across the Bay on a boat. They had never been to San Francisco. I just thought this was terrible. I wanted to take them to San Francisco, and I had a class of 49 at the time (they had no business giving me 49 students). Some of the students at U.C. doing their practice work had only 12 or 14 students and I had 49 and was out in a portable building. This was all part of the business they were giving me. The first time I was student teaching, it was in the spring, and all the windows were open and they were practicing track out in the school yard where we were. My students, naturally, could look out the window and see the kids running and jumping. You can imagine with this kind of rivalry how hard it was for me to keep order. But I always had a very strident voice and so of course I didn't have any trouble making myself heard. I was pretty exact, too, and a very good disciplinarian. So I made out. But it was a very bad situation in which to teach. Anyway, I sent notes home by a lot of the students who were from foreign homes. If they were white, most of them were foreigners. They were Italians and Greeks and of Greek extraction, and some of them were Portuguese.

Henderson: Did you have any Orientals?

Pittman: Just a few, not many - two or three. But most of them were Negroes and foreigners, meaning their parents were immigrants. They had come from the old country and these children were having a hard time with English as their learned language, because they were hearing foreign languages in their homes, for the most part. Oh, they were struggling to talk. Their fathers learned English because they had to learn to keep their jobs. But the mothers talked very poor English. I sent these notes home and the kids understood that I wanted permission to take them to Golden Gate Park. You know I didn't have good sense because if I had, I would have never attempted to take 49 children across the Bay to San Francisco. We had to go on the boat. We caught the train and went down to the pier and then we got on the boat. We didn't have the bridge then. The boats were running and we went across to San Francisco and I had to manage all of them, getting them on the street car and taking them out to Golden Gate Park. I remember that I didn't make too much of it, but I just kind of inadvertently talked to Bill (my future husband) about the fact that I was bringing my class over the following week.

Everybody brought his lunch. And I spent my whole allowance going on this outing, because you see, I wanted to be able to buy a drink for the children and some of them didn't have enough money. They had their boat fare. I've forgotten what the boat fare was round trip, but it was some very nominal sum. I think it was two bits or something. It was very cheap. But it was a lot of money to them. Some of them didn't have their car fare and car fare was just a nickel. So I just spent part of my allowance in order that no one would be left behind.

Pittman: So I looked up and I saw Bill coming and I thought, "Oh Lord. Now what is he coming over here for?" At first I thought that maybe he didn't see me. But he came over to the park because he had heard me say that I was going over with the class. I had fifth grade, and the children said, "Oh, he came to see Miss Hall. Oh, Miss Hall, who is he?" I said, "Oh, I know him, but I don't know him very well." You know,I was very nonchalant about this. But the kids discerned why he came over there.

"Oh, Miss Hall. Who is that?"

The little girls gathered around. He came up to where we were. He took the children on rides. Oh, he became very popular with the kids, you know. So he helped me entertain them and everything and we finally returned to this side of the Bay. But it was quite an undertaking. But you see, I thought it was easy. After I'd been doing this practice teaching for a year I realized that although I liked the teaching and it was thought that I was doing well, I wasn't satisfied with it. I didn't somehow want to be in a classroom. The classroom kind of held me a prisoner. I wanted to be out of there.

I was very much interested in people. But if I had understood, number one, my highest skill, and number two, my interest and so forth, I wouldhave gone into law. I believe that would have been using my highest skill.

Henderson: Which is?

Pittman: Well, I think it is speaking publicly. I never would have been just a civil lawyer. I would have gone in for presentation of cases in

Pittman: court, courtroom work, and probably criminal law. But at least I knew that I didn't like teaching in the classroom, and yet, I was so interested in the students. I liked teaching and I had no problem, but it was just that I felt a prisoner in that classroom. I felt I had to get out of there. I knew the thing I was very much interested in was doing my field work, you see. So I knew that I would get placement and do my field work in the social service field. Cal didn't have a social service major, but believe it or not, San Francisco State did. Of course, I have skipped a lot. I stayed out quite a long time, because by this time I had married and Bill had to get out of Dental School. So he did finish.

Henderson: How late was it when you went to State?

Pittman: I think I came out of the class of '40 or '41. You see I practically went back to college and started all over because I built up a completely new major. I had to go back and do, I think, two years to come out with my A.B. in Social Service. I did field placement. I went to the Children's Agency and I went to Langley Porter Clinic. When I graduated from San Francisco State I decided that I would go to the School of Social Welfare at Cal and get my master's degree. So this is what I did. It was quite a circuitous route that I took, you see.

I think that I made a good choice but I think that if I had had more insight into what I really might have been capable of doing, maybe I would have gone into law. But I entered this other field and I was intensely interested in it. During World War II I had a placement at the Richmond Travelers Aid Society, USO.

III. Work in Social Welfare

Pittman: Travelers Aid worked with transients and people who were on the move. I manned their booth at Richmond and we had all of these poor people coming in from all over the Southland mainly, and principally from Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. These poor people would come to join their husbands who had come ahead of them to work in the shipyards. They had their children with them. All they'd know was that their husband's name was "Baby Lee" but they wouldn't know where he lived. They came in the summer and it had been so hot in the South. I could sympathize with them because I first came up here from Bakersfield in the summer and I thought it was going to be hot here just like in Bakersfield. The children wouldn't even have a sweater,some of them. Oh how that wind would be blowing out in Richmond; it would be so cold. I was intensely interested in this work because I had been all along interested and working in the NAACP. You know, underneath all of this, I was working in the NAACP. We had been trying to get those shipyards to open up for Negroes to work. First, employers said they weren't going to have any Negroes work in the shipyards. We had a time opening up the Kaiser Industries, and we had a doubly hard time in trying to get some housing for those men. Some of the people were sleeping in "hot beds." So naturally, when their families came, you'd have a very difficult time finding them because all the landlady knew was that she had a stream of people going and coming. One man would work one shift and sleep in the "hot bed," then that one would be up and gone, and there would be another shift. So they

Pittman: had so many people living in one place they didn't really know exactly who they were. It was utterly horrible. And a woman would come to Travelers Aid and say her husband's name was Baby.

"Well, I know," I'd say. "But what is it, William? John?"

"No, Baby, Baby Lee."

And all these little children would be sitting there, and you had to try to find housing for them. Of course, we had places. That was our business as an agency - placing these people. And I had some of the darndest cases that you ever heard of!

But you see, this work was somehow more moving for me. I liked it better than teaching because this was working with people.

At Cal they placed me at San Francisco Public Welfare Department where I spent the most time of all my placements. It was all out in Hunter's Point. All down on North Beach area with old derelicts and a lot of single men. I had them in my case load, and they were just winos and misfits and had deteriorated until they were not really competent men in the real sense of the word. Of course, they had to be unemployable or they couldn't even be in the case load.

But then I was very moved by the work I did out at Contra Costa Social Welfare. I liked that placement very much because I was doing child welfare work there. Before I left, they integrated the case load. So a social worker would see the whole family. If there was a person who was on old age assistance the worker would

Pittman: work with him. If there was a child in the family, the worker would work with him. The worker worked with the family as a unit so they wouldn't have three workers coming to the same home as they did before. Previously, they had one worker to see the children and another to see another member of the family. When they changed the method, I was greatly relieved.

Henderson: In your work at the Contra Costa Social Welfare Agency, what did you think of the way the social welfare department of California was dispensing welfare funds at that time?

Pittman: You will remember that this has been a very long time ago. I was working there during the years 1943 - 1945, and this was at a time when there was great unrest, displacement and difficulty in connection with many new families coming into California.

Of course, Contra Costa County did not get as many of these new families as we saw in San Francisco, Oakland and Richmond which were the ports of entry. These were the places where the families entered. But they got some reaction from this in Contra Costa County. There were new families there and families that were disadvantaged.

One of the principal concerns at that time was the dispensing of welfare to new people. It was almost like the "Grapes of Wrath" days, when we got the people from the dust bowl, the Oakies and Arkies. People without anything were coming into the state and finding themselves faced with applying for welfare.

Even though these people had come to work in the shipyards, some of them did not get placed. Some of them found themselves in dire straits, particularly, those who came on a short-term

Pittman: basis, because when they arrived here their husbands hadn't had a chance to work long enough to get them housing, food or clothing, all the things that they needed.

The thing that came into play that was so important at that time was the matter of residence. In California, we had the three-year residence law at the time. So they weren't residents because they weren't here long enough. The minute they stayed over one year they lost their residency in all of the surrounding states - Oklahoma, Louisiana, Texas. All of these states had a one-year resident requirement. So, they were in a no-man's land. They weren't eligible for anything in the states where they came from and they were not eligible here in California. Of course, we did have the law that called for emergency aid. And this was being paid by all of the public welfare agencies. Contra Costa was no exception.

The residence law caused a lot of problems. In fact, it made such an impression on me that I did my thesis in the School of Social Welfare at Cal on the California Residence Law. I used the raw data of the indigent case load for research material. So, I was very taken with this.

It was good that Contra Costa integrated welfare case loads because contrary to what many people who don't know Contra Costa County think, there's a lot of rural area in Contra Costa County, and people are not in one close area, but scattered around in the outlying areas.

Pittman: I remember that I was sort of surprised about this because the first time I began to do any social work in the field of public assistance, I was in San Francisco which was a totally urban area. Then when I went to Contra Costa and had people way out in mud flats all around, this made a great impression on me because I remember having to walk over trestles to go way out to some of those little shacks where these people were living. The only way to get to some of these places was to walk on these boards, and I know we had several social workers who had a fear of water, and they were afraid to walk on these boards.

Henderson: Which group on welfare seemed to be getting the least attention - the aged, the blind, the crippled, or the children?

Pittman: I would really not be in a position to say, but I think that, more or less, the people who were getting the least attention were the people that were the non-residents, just in general. These non-residents had lost their residency in the state they came from and hadn't been here three years. The non-resident was the person who suffered because he had to go to quite some length for assistance and was kept dangling in a way of speaking. Non-residents couldn't get their full needs taken care of except on a day-to-day basis, which put them in a very insecure and almost untenable position.

So I would say that it was the non-resident that suffered most. It stuck out like a sore thumb.

Henderson: Was the three-year resident law mostly instigated by federal regulations, state, or county?

Pittman: I think it was the state of California purely. I think the state of California had worked this out. They were trying to discourage people from being on public assistance and they were trying to do everything possible to cut down on the number of people who would be the responsibility of the counties and state. And the county board of supervisors were the ones, you see, who were making the determinations. It's true that after the time of federal aid to needy children and old age assistance there were matching funds; but even then the counties were very anxious to keep their case loads low. And they didn't want to match anything, even though the federal government did in later years give matching funds for these various programs.

Henderson: This was in the late'40s, I suppose.

Pittman: The state and the county were still very anxious to keep welfare rolls low. They were very penalizing and I feel that they resorted to questionable practices to make the investigations that they made, and the legislation that was passed to place the responsibility of mothers and fathers on their children if the children had a certain amount. All these things were done to try to keep the state and the counties as far removed as possible from supplementing or giving welfare funds.

Henderson: Do you remember when McLainism became a part of the old pension system in California. It was named after a man by the name of George McLain.

Pittman: I knew him well and I knew the movement well. McLain was a great champion of aid to the needy aged. His movement probably was one of the catalytic agents which made old age assistance more liberal.

Pittman: His movement was so big at one time that they became very powerful because there were so many people that were members of his organizatinn.

There was not a day or time that I ever remember during that era when I went to the state capitol, that some of McLain's lobbyists, or maybe he himself, were not there lobbying for this legislation. And they got so powerful that people were afraid not to do something because they were afraid that they would be defeated for election, as indeed some of them were.

He was interested in the senior citizens. They were the McLain group. They weren't saying it was the "senior citizens," they were talking about "this is McLain's group." And McLain's name got to be known all over the state. A lot of people belonged to his group and sent their dues. They had a very powerful and effective lobby because they were really organized.

Henderson: He was mainly interested in senior citizens, but it expanded into other interests, is that what you're saying?

Pittman: No, I'm saying that he simply kept pushing all the time so what this really did was to liberalize the past laws, particularly assistance for the aged. And then this called for a look at the whole welfare package because if you were beginning to talk about liberalizing aid you have to look at the social welfare code in order to liberalize it for senior citizens. So if you did it for them, it was a tool in order to look at the whole legislative program that the state of California had for aged, child welfare, and the blind.

Pittman: So then they began to look at the programs. Naturally, the whole legislative program of the state of California that had to do with the welfare of children, aged, and even families was looked at. McLain's movement was certainly a very important manifestation on the scene. It was important because you couldn't go any where in the state of California where people hadn't heard of McLain's movement.

Henderson: What did the black community think of the movement?

Pittman: Oh, we had a lot of black people who were in McLain's movement. And he had black leadership people. I can't think of all of their names right now; I'd have to research that, but there were a number of people that were very closely allied with him.

Why there were some people who wouldn't do anything until they paid their dues to McLain. Now, it was claimed by some people - and I don't know how true this was - that McLain was also interested in McLain and his power for himself and the things that he wanted to do. I don't know whether this was true or whether he at times victimized people in his movement or used the movement for his own ends. I never was close enough to the movement to make an assessment of this or to say this, but this was generally talked about.

He had hundreds and hundreds of black people in his movement who were working right along with him. This was a well-integrated movement.

Henderson: His initiative to get the old age pension plan liberalized in 1948 was then repealed in 1949. It only lasted one year.

Pittman: Yes. But you see, it had a residual effect. Even though it didn't last, it had something to do with liberalizing and bringing to the attention of the whole state and the whole population the plight of people and the fact that senior citizens didn't have enough money to live on. So it had an effect, even though that particular piece of legislation didn't stand up. The campaigns that they waged were just simply very effective. And as a lobbyist, McLain was something else. He practically lived in Sacramento, I guess. It's been a long time since I thought about this, and I used to know about it quite intimately and it will never go away from anybody's mind who was active in the Capitol or was active in the field of human rights or people's rights, older people's rights and this kind of thing. You'd never forget the McLain movement if you were an adult and were living in the state at the time.

Henderson: What kind of person was McLain?

Pittman: Oh, he was a very affable man. Naturally, by lobbying and talking to people, he was a very convincing speaker. Why he had those people really believing that they just had to give those dues every month or week -- and I've forgotten how often -- but people would do just anything to get their dues. They <u>had</u> to pay them.

He was effective. His personality was the cornerstone of his movement, how it started and how it kept going, because he was an effective speaker. He had the knack for making people believe in him and in the movement, and this was because of a

Pittman: facet of his personality. People who have been on the public scene, and we see this today, part of what they are able to accomplish has to do with their magnetic personality and the way that they can project themselves.

This quality was exemplified in the leadership of Martin Luther King. He believed in his people, that they needed to be freed. We see it in Roy Wilkins; we saw it in Thurgood Marshall, the way they threw themselves into their movements, they, themselves, personally. Whitney Young was a very persuasive speaker. It was not just that he had the Urban League, but he was a persuasive speaker. We see it in a man that's on the scene now, Reverend Leon Sullivan, whom I'm working with in OIC. He is a very persuasive, dynamic speaker.

We saw this in Mary McCloud Bethune. There were also many, many women who had done tremendous things. I don't think they've done the same things, but they were very, very wonderful women on the scene such as, Mary Church Terrill and Nannie Burroughs. When Nannie Burroughs began to speak about homes for girls and all of this, the National Baptist convention just said, "We've got to give this money for these homes for these girls...." All of these people that I have seen on the scene through the years were very persuasive speakers -- dynamic men and women, themselves.

So, McLain was a man whose personality was to be reckoned with.

Henderson: I remember that Governor Warren came out publicly against the proposition that got McLainism into the system. And yet, Warren was supposedly very interested in liberal welfare measures.

Pittman: Yes, but you see that you have to understand that there were a lot of people that were against McLain because they felt that McLain was using these old people, and that's why I intimated just a few minutes ago that I had no way of knowing really, and one is reluctant to say unless it has been proven, that one has cheated or embezzled or done something illegal.

Henderson: What professors did you find outstanding while you were working on your master's at Cal?

Pittman: Well, there were a number of them. I had Social Work and Law with Dr. Hazeltine Taylor. She became, later, a member of my thesis committee. But before that, and before I knew her in that capacity, I had her for a course in Public Assistance. She was very impressive, very good. She was outstanding. There was also a Dr. Maurine McKeany who was very good. And, of course, there was the Dean of the school, Dr. Milton Chernin, who was a very dynamic person. However, I didn't have any classes with him. I know I was least impressed by Dr. Walter Friedlander. He was on my thesis committee, also. I was not prejudiced against him because he spoke with a foreign accent, but at that time he had not been too long in this country from Germany, and he was very difficult to understand. I didn't really get some of what he was saying when he was lecturing. In 1946 I took my degree.

Actually, I had more women instructors than I did men. I think in the School of Social Welfare there were more women. I had no men as supervisors in any of the placements where I went. At San Francisco Public Welfare, naturally, I had to come in contact with Ronald Born, who was the head of San Francisco Public Welfare. But I had no supervision from a man in any of the agencies where I was placed.

IV. California State Association of Colored Women's Clubs

Henderson: I suppose that your work with Fanny Wall's Children's Home and Day Nursery must have come some time after you stopped school or was it during school?

Pittman: I would say it was in the interim when I was out of school. I knew about it because I was in the California State Association of Colored Women's Clubs which sponsored it. You see, while I was out of school as a result of not passing the physical examination, I married and I stayed out because I would not be accepted until I gained some more weight. Also, I remained out of school because Bill wasn't through with school either. I did several things. I got a job in a very exclusive shoe store in San Francisco and did some other things.

The Fanny Wall Children's Home was another thing that made me want to be able to speak authoritatively as a social worker. I knew that it was being run like somebody's private home, and not according to standards. The women that I was working with seemed to feel that they were being put upon because it was a Negro institution. It wasn't that at all! There was a state manual which called for the standards of so many children per room, fire escapes, and certain definite physical things which a person had to have to operate an agency like this.

Henderson: Who put ou the manual, the state?

Pittman: I think it was a state manual. Anyway, there were rules and regulations. I guess the Health and Education Code carried certain basic requirements. Then the county had requirements for foster homes. This was an institution, but it was a foster

Pittman: home placement in that these were children who were not living in their own homes. The reason why they let it go on for so long was because they couldn't open up any foster homes with Negro parents and they didn't have any place to put all these Negro children; so they were glad to have a Fanny Wall Children's Home and Day Nursery to absorb some of these children who ordinarily would have been in a foster home.

Henderson: I understand there were delinquents, children who had gotten into trouble, living there, too.

Pittman: Well, some of them were. Some of them did come over to us from the Probation Home. So it was kind of a heterogeneous group. Some of them were just orphans and some of them were abandoned.

Henderson: About how long did you work there?

Pittman: I didn't work directly in the home. My association with the home was because I was then very active with the California State Association of Colored Women's Clubs, serving as state president of that organization.

Henderson: Nineteen Hundred Thirty-six is the date I have.

Pittman: When I was the state president the Fanny Wall Children's Home was one of their projects and their monuments. It came under my purview as the head of the association to know about the home and to be working with the people who were running it. I guess I was very active with the Fanny Wall Children's Home and Day Nursery for ten or twelve years. There were government people who were conscientious and they weren't just winking their eyes and saying, "Now these are some poor old colored ladies." They were saying, "You must follow the standards that are required in homes of this kind; you must bring it up to standard!" So we were

Pittman: working hard to try to see if we couldn't bring the home up to standard. This was another thing that caused me to want to go into social service so that they could say of me, "Well, you know what you are talking about," which I did. I could read. I knew. But if I were a graduate social worker, then I would be able to do these things, you see, and talk with authority. I could also talk to the heads of agencies about it and have rapport with them.

Henderson: What other things did you do while you were president from 1936-38 of the California State Association of Colored Women's Clubs?

Pittman: Well, we were very anxious to see that Negro families, and particularly Negro women, participated in political activity. Some of them, when women finally got the vote, never bothered about voting at all!

You'd go to them and they'd say, "Oh, no, I don't register. My husband registers." This was a common statement that came from Negro women at that time. As if to say, "Well, he votes but I don't. So don't speak to me. You can come back to talk to him about the candidates, if you want to." We were very anxious to wake up these people and we were working very hard even back then to get Negro women to vote, regardless of the fact that they had the excuse that they had to work. I say excuse, because a lot of them used it as an excuse not to go to the PTA and the school. We were trying to get the parents to go to the school. We knew that we wouldn't get many of the men. But we were trying to get the mothers. If they knew that their children were having difficulty we were trying to get them to go to the school and find

Pittman: out what it was, talk to the teachers and find out how their children were getting along. We have never had the participation, even today or even in the past decade, nor had the kind of turnout that we would think was at all representative of Negro mothers and parents at the PTA. So we put great stress on working with the PTA because that was the link with the children.

Also, it came to us that if a group of children were accused of something - it might be a group with three or four colored in it - they'd take the children to the detention home. Then, somehow or other, all of the little white children and all of the rest of them who were not Negro got bailed out. But the little Negro children were held to answer. We were very interested in working with the Juvenile Court for this reason. We did a number of very outstanding things.

Even back then there was a lot of agitation in connection with the prisons, and we were very anxious and worked a lot during that era to get a separate prison for women. Finally we got Tehachapi, which had formerly been an all-purpose and a male prison, turned over as a women's maximum security prison.

Henderson: Did it become an all-women's prison during your administration as president.

Pittman: I don't remember exactly whether it coincided with my years as president. But I do know that I was very active working with the California Association of Negro Women's Clubs and this was among the goals that we had.

We were also very much interested in the overcrowding at the old county courthouse and county jail at First and Broadway streets. We wanted to do something about changing that county

Pittman: jail because it was absolutely horrible! This was before they built the new Courthouse over by the lake. We had committees that went to see the sheriff. We tried to get some things done. I imagine that our agitation did not come to naught, but I could not say that as a result of this they put on five Negro women as deputies or they did this or they did that. I couldn't say that exactly. But we were among the groups that were agitating. I think that it is so interesting that we have people who think that the agitation that is now about jails and the repression in prisons is the first time work has been done on this problem. But there was more work done in a sustained way by Negroes as a group then than now. I know in general, there are a lot of us that are interested in this problem. But I don't know of any groups specifically that had it as one of their goals, and one of their areas of concern to as great an extent as the women in that period.

TAREA PITTMAN INTERVIEW #3

August 25, 1971

Joyce Henderson, Interviewer

Henderson: When was the California Association of Colored Women's Clubs founded?

Pittman: It was founded in 1906. As far as we can judge it was in June of that year. There was to be a state meeting that year but the earthquake and fire in San Francisco was of such magnitude and caused so much distress that the meeting was called off. The members finally had a meeting in 1908, when they seated the first state president with a few clubs from Southern California, the Art and Industrial Club, and the Fanny Jackson Coppen Club of Oakland.

Henderson: Who was Fanny Jackson Coppen?

Pittman: She was an outstanding clubwoman.

Henderson: Was she as prominent as Phyllis Wheatley?

Pittman: Yes, but in a different field.

Pittman: Fanny Jackson Coppen was one of the most outstanding Negro women in America. She was a native of Washington, D.C. and the first Negro graduate of Oberlin College in 1865. She was principal of the first Industrial School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where she taught for over 30 years. Her Industrial School predated Booker T. Washington's school in Tuskegee.

She came to Oakland in 1899, and after her visit Oakland Club women were so impressed that they changed the name of their "Women's Club" to "Fanny Jackson Coppen Club."

Henderson: How does this association differ from the California Council of Negro Women?

Pittman: Well, it was the forerunner of all the statewide Negro women's groups in California.

It was the very first to be organized

Pittman: and its aims and objectives were a little bit different in that they might not have been quite as diverse, but the times were such that women - particularly Negro women - were free to do so little at that time. For instance, one of its aims and objectives was to entertain visitors that came to the West Coast, particularly women.

You might ask why did we have an organization to entertain visitors from the East? This was because there was no place that Negro visitors from the East could stay except in private homes.

At first, in the days of '49 and thereafter, the Negroes that were in the state at that time, opened their doors and they were hospitable beyond all reason and shared their food, their lodging and every thing. Many people proved to be so disreputable, and there was no way to check on people. Some turned out to be robbers, theives, murderers and everything, so people closed their doors, and it was some time before they opened them again. This meant that when visitors came, unless they had people that they knew in the state, relatives or close personal friends, they had no place to stay. They couldn't stay in any public place and there were no homes open to them. This was one of the objectives of the founding of the early clubs - to entertain and to see that visitors who came to California were treated well and had a place to stay and they opened their homes and this kind of thing. Of course as time went on they added programs. They also added departments; they added to the kind of work that they were doing. But it was the forerunner and the first of all the Negro women's groups in the state.

Pittman: The California Association of Colored Women's Clubs was originally the California State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. When they went into and joined the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs they were the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs. So they dropped the "Federation" and became the California Association of Colored Women's Clubs. They used the word "Association" instead of "Federation" in conformity with the national name.

Henderson: Later on the California Council of Negro Women was formed?

Pittman: Yes. The California Council of Negro Women had been in operation for approximately 38 years.

V. The California Council of Negro Women

Henderson: During what years did you serve as president of the California Council of Negro Women?

Pittman: Well, I was the president of the California Council of Negro Women during the years 1948 to 1951.

Henderson: What were the general concerns of that council?

Pittman: The general concerns of this state group of women, made up of clubs located throughout the state of California, was to raise the standards of black homes throughout the state, particularly as it referred to the well-being of women and children. Now, of course, the whole family unit is concerned, but the emphasis was on the well-being of women and children.

Henderson: Could you tell me more about the committee on homemaking?

Pittman: The California Council of Negro Women is made up of various departments, such as, legislation, arts and crafts, music, homemaking,

Pittman: health and housing; and as such, the programs have developed statewide in these particular areas that touched the lives of all women and homes throughout the state.

Very early the California Council of Negro Women recognized that black women were called upon to work in greater numbers in proportion to their numbers in the general population, because of the real need to help supplement the family income.

For the most part, many of them did not have the kinds of skills that would place them in the white collar worker areas, and therefore many black women found themselves in domestic service.

Now, this meant that they went to work early in the day and they came home late. Consequently, particularly where the father was working (he probably was a blue collar worker or a laborer), this meant that together they arrived home very late and left very early in the morning. Their children, unless they had an elderly member like an aunt or a grandmother living in the home were without supervision at certain hours of the day, particularly the pre-school children or the young children that came home from school.

They were most anxious about the continuation of and the expansion of the child care centers which have come about, a few of them under WPA days and which were supported by federal funds and some state funds.

All of these child care centers were of great concern to the women of the California Council of Negro Women. They were working

Pittman: to try to have the economic restrictions lowered even where they were supposed to be minimal, they still were too high for Negro women to include in their budget and to be able to place their children there.

Not only that, the facilities were limited and naturally there weren't enough nursery schools or schools for young children when they came home from school. Some were just simply rejected, and the facilities cost too much.

Henderson: What legislative committee(s) did the Negro Council of Women appeal to?

Pittman: Well, they were very much interested in the health committee and the education committee. Always they were interested in legislation because, tied to everything, was the need to get some laws passed that would enable us to have some of the things that we needed.

Henderson: I believe that Governor Earl Warren was also interested in getting child care centers developed for those living in the state. Do you remember this?

Pittman: Yes, I do. And I do remember that in this regard the California Council of Negro Women banded together with a number of other women's groups, some of them rather new, ad hoc community groups. One of the groups was the California Federation of Women, which was, of course, a white group. All of the other groups were white. The Council of Church Women was also involved. I distinctly remember us chartering buses to go to Sacramento.

Pittman: Upon several occasions Governor Warren addressed the groups at their combined caucus meeting at the Capitol to tell us of his concern about getting legislation that would expand the whole field of child care centers and nursery schools. He was particularly concerned that working mothers have such facilities to care for their children.

I do not at the present time have before me those bills, but of course, I could research this and find out the bills that did come up and we were very much interested in and supporting the child care center bills that were introduced during Governor Warren's term of office.

Henderson: And would it be during your term of office as president of the Council or some where around then?

Pittman: During my term as state president, from the inception and every year since, we have had on the agenda of the California Council of Negro Women the matter of child care centers, pre-school education, and the whole matter of the health of children and people in the home as part of the working program of the California Council.

This is one of the cornerstones of the work that they have done and are presently doing.

Henderson: And that meeting in Sacramento where a lot of the women in the state met, was this by any chance the governor's conference or was it a women's conference?

Pittman: It was a women's conference that had been called together under the auspices of the various organizational heads acting as co-chairmen. It was a women's group and I do not remember whether

Pittman: at this time it was the state committee to increase the child care centers or what the specific name was, but it was an over-all canopy group. It was made up of a federation of women's organizations, church, civic, ethnic groups. At that time, we were not hearing so much about the Chicano involvement, however, there were Oriental and other women in the group represented by the church, particularly.

I do not remember a specific Chicano name group. But the California Council of Negro Women had been an on-going group. It was statewide, and it was invited to attend.

The PTA's were very active in this. Always the PTA's were included in this over-all group -- state PTA and local PTA's in various groups. A very large PTA delegation came from the Los Angeles area.

We arrived in the Capitol at Sacramento quite early in the morning and we had assembly rooms set aside which were used for these kinds of over-all state movements of people who were interested in legislation. And everyone saw their assemblyman, their state senator, and then we went to the heads of the committees who had the bills that we were interested in. Conferences were prearranged.

Governor Warren did come down and talk to the group and I think it was afternoon, as I remember, before we went into the committee hearings. He was very cordial and assured us that he would do everything he could do to be interested in and follow the bill, and certainly if a bill could be gotten out of a

Pittman: committee and onto the floor, he would do what he could to be interested in it. And if the bill got out, naturally, he would sign it.

Henderson: Do you remember a point at which you felt that the Negro mother was getting more of a fair share in terms of service by the child care centers?

Pittman: Well, I think that the impetus that women started then, has continued throughout the years with women pressuring to get lower costs for child care.

I know that today we still do not have enough facilities and we still have a price range that is prohibitive as far as black mothers are concerned, unless they are in the higher income brackets.

But the woman who works for lower wages and is a domestic or has a very poor paying job still is finding it very difficult to find a place to put her children while she works.

Many Negro women are in that bracket of the poor. This does not mean that white mothers who are poor and Chicano mothers and Indian mothers and Oriental mothers and every ethnic group do not have the same problem! All of the working poor suffer in exactly the same way.

It's just that there are so many more proportionately in the brackets of the minority groups and this is the thing that makes it more prohibitive for them. But this is not to say that there are not many, many mothers of the majority group who are working poor. They have exactly the same problem, too. It's just that

Pittman: black mothers find that they're in this group to greater proportions.

Henderson: I've heard one professional woman talking about child care centers during wartime, and she talked as though they were a convenience for professional women only. She never mentioned the poor women. She didn't seem to think of them as a service to the poor. I was just wondering if this is what you're saying?

Pittman: The California Council of Negro Women is not just a professional women's group. Black women have many professional women's groups -- the sororities, to an extent, fraternal organizations, and others that certainly would have a class status, not only as far as their social life is concerned, but also it would have something to do with their economic capability for doing things.

Nowadays in more and more black families, the husband has a professional salary and is in a bracket that is far from being a depressed one, and the wife is working, perhaps in the professions also. Combined, comparatively speaking now, they're very able to provide their family with many things -- campers and boats and all the things that middle income class people have. And they are able to send the children to camp and able to do a lot of things.

The California Council of Negro Women is a group of women who are not all alike along a social line or the upper bracket of economics. Not that there are not some professional women in it, this is not what I am saying. But I am saying that the rank and file person in the California Council of Negro Women is interested in the poor, in the disadvantaged, in trying to upgrade women in

Pittman: their jobs and to see that they get additional skills, and to see that their housing is better, their families are better fed, their children are taken care of while they're working. This is the kind of organization it is. It is a rank and file organization, I would call it, a "grass roots" women's organization.

VI. Alameda County Grand Jury, 1947

Henderson: I understand that in 1947 you served on the Alameda County Grand Jury. What committees were you on?

Pittman: I was on several committees. One of them that I remember very vividly was the committee on county institutions. On this committee we visited all the county institutions. I was particularly interested at that time in the condition of the jail and the Detention Home. What we were calling the Detention Home at that time is really the Juvenile Hall and the Juvenile Home.

Henderson: Had talk begun at that time about a new Juvenile Hall?

Pittman: Oh, yes. They were very anxious. The old juvenile set-up down on 16th and Poplar streets was overcrowded, inadequate in every way. It was a very, very old facility and of course it was grossly understaffed, too little room, too little of everything. It just turned out to be a very poor facility because it got so overcrowded and was so antiquated in its layout. You know they had congregate sleeping facilities and the whole thing was just almost impossible. So we were very anxious to get a new Juvenile Hall.

Henderson: And the new one that was built eventually, is that the one on 50th Avenue in Oakland?

Pittman: Yes, it is the one out in East Oakland.

Henderson: As a member of the committee what did you do beside visit these places?

Pittman: Well, we finally made recommendations based on our visits and our appraisal of the program and of the total facility as a whole. So we did end up making a report. I don't have a copy of the report at this time; these things are all filed away.

Henderson: You don't have a copy?

Pittman: I don't have a copy at home at all. But we made recommendations about most of the important institutions and we asked, even at that time, about jail reforms, about that whole Juvenile Hall set-up and the Probation Department - - these kinds of things. We made really a very detailed recommendation. You hear about Grand Jury investigations; every year the Grand Jury does make recommendations now. Many of them can't be carried out. There are no funds perhaps to build a new facility or there are many reasons why some of them can't be carried cut, but then of course it is a matter of agitation and public education. So eventually some of the things do get done because year after year people are making these recommendations and year after year nothing is being done. Well, it finally seeps down to the authorities and the supervisors, the city council, and in this instance it is a county grand jury and it is the Board of Supervisors that are appraised of the situation because you are trying to get them to do something about the reforms which you want to carry out.

Henderson: Was the building of the new Juvenile Hall one of those kinds of reforms that came from recommendations being made year after year?

Pittman: Yes, I think so.

Henderson: Your committee wasn't the first one to do this?

Pittman: Oh, no. It wasn't. It had been understood that the facility was just overcrowded and the staff was just too small and there was an inadequate program. It had been known before but it was just a matter of going back again, looking at it and saying that it was just an impossible situation, trying to agitate to get something done.

Henderson: Do you remember any other specific recommendations your committee made?

Pittman: Well, I know that we were very much disturbed about the jail and particularly what they called "the drunk tank."

They had a tank where they threw the drunks. There were more drunks on the weekends than there were on the regular on-going days of the week. These people would be thrown in there, for instance, Friday or Saturday night, and there was no court so they would have to remain in this drunk tank until they came up for arraignment on Monday morning. This was a very bad practice because we found that in the first place there were too many people in there and oh, it was a terrible place! The people were just thrown in there and they were lying around on the floor without adequate supervision or sanitary facilities. Very often there would be someone who would be mistakenly put in there. They wouldn't be drunk. Of course nowadays they try to have people who are diabetics or have trouble with their locomotion to be tagged and wear some type of identification. But I know that there were a number of people who sued the county because they were put in

Pittman: there and they weren't drunk. I do remember about the drunk tank. And then the food was, we felt, very poor. I remember that we talked about just the whole general handling of the prisoners and particularly the physical facilities as they existed and as they were used.

Henderson: Did you detect any discriminatory practices in there?

Pittman: Oh, absolutely! They had the prisoners completely segregated. In the cells in the county jail at that time, all the Negroes were in certain cells together. It was a matter of being completely segregated.

The other thing that we were interested in was the health facilities. At that time they segregated all of the patients in the hospitals. If they didn't have a ward that had black people in it, then they would put you in a private room in order to keep up the segregated pattern.

But it was very bad and we had a lot of trouble with getting Negro nurses jobs and living quarters. This was a terrible thing that we fought for years. Not only were they segregating the patients, but they were segregating the nurses that were in there.

Henderson: Did hospitals come under the jurisdiction of the committee?

Pittman: The county hospital did, yes. The county hospital was among the institutions that we visited and were very much interested in. So there was complete segregation in the hospitals at that time. If you went into a room you'd never see a white and a black patient in the same room together. They segregated them according to race. And the same thing was done in the jail.

Henderson: I could imagine some black patients got very good rooms, if they could get a private room just because there were no rooms in the black sections.

Pittman: Well, sometimes it did work to their advantage because white people had to pay for their prejudice. Whenever you do some of these things artificially well then sometimes it just doesn't work out, you see, and it works out to your disadvantage. So it did, at times.

VII. Early Work in the NAACP

Henderson: How active were you in the NAACP when you were serving on this committee?

Pittman: Very active. During this time I was a member of the Alameda County Branch and was actively working with them in their branches. I lived at that time in the same place as I now live except that I wasn't in this building. We had a house then in which my husband's office was located and we finally took down the house and built this building on the same spot, so I have actually lived here the whole time. I was very, very active in the NAACP.

Henderson: What was the NAACP doing about discriminatory practices in the hospitals?

Pittman: They were working very hard on it. They had committees; they were applying to everyone that was in authority: the County Board of Supervisors, the city council where things came under the jurisdiction of the city. Of course the chief offenders were the Civil Service jobs that we were trying very hard to have on a non-discriminatory basis, the Police Department and the Fire Department.

Pittman: We really went after that. We were working at that for a very long time.

Henderson: Were you able to get any black men on the police force?

Pittman: Yes. We got a few on the police force and we got a few in the Sheriff's Department. We finally got several Negro women in the Sheriff's Department. All in all we broke down much of the discrimination that had to do with housing the prisoners and trying to do away with police brutality. This was very much talked about at that time and we worked very hard on it, very hard. I don't know any program, outside of trying to place Negro school teachers, that we worked any harder on than we worked on trying to do away with discrimination in the county and city facilities.

Henderson: How did the NAACP workers go about doing this?

Pittman: Well, the NAACP is composed of committees and all of the work is done through committees. The president and board of directors had the responsibility of carrying out NAACP national programs locally. This meant that they set up an Education Committee, a Membership Committee, Finance, Labor and Industry Committee, a Youth Work Committee, a Veteran's Committee. All of these committees were set up. Each had a chairman, someone that had particular knowledge of the field that they were going to work in. If it was Labor and Industry maybe a man who was very much interested in and knew or belonged to a labor union would be on that committee. If he wasn't the head of it he would be on that committee, and these committees worked in the particular field of the interest of that committee. They would hold committee meetings and they would get factual data,

Pittman: do surveys because at that time there wasn't this wealth of material that you have now that you can draw upon about how many Negroes there are here. They'd make their own surveys and find out the places where we were not employed, or if we were employed, in what capacities we worked.

We would receive complaints. It is an organization set up to serve people, and we would get many complaints that people had applied for positions, taken examinations, and were never called. We would then go to the Civil Service Commission of the city or county and try to find out why these particular Negroes didn't pass or why they couldn't get placed on the list to be appointed. We got all the factual data. Then after we had the factual data or got individual complaints from people who had been discriminated against, we would go to the Board of Education, to the City Manager or the City Council or the County Board of Supervisors, or whoever was in charge of that particular institution, and try to find out why this discrimination existed and what could be done about it and try to exert enough pressure on them to get them to lift their discriminatory practice from the facility. All of this was done through committees. Then the committees would report back to the board and the membership. There were regular committee meetings once every month and every committee was supposed to meet at least once a month. Then you'd take something to the board of directors and you'd end up at the membership meeting with the whole membership being appraised of what had happened, what we were trying to do about it.

Pittman: We even did some boycotting at that time. We asked people not to patronize a certain place. We were instrumental in getting the Civil Rights Law put on the books where people could be fined. It is true it was only a $100 fine and court costs but this was a step forward. We got that passed in the legislature. It was a state law that if you discriminated against anyone because of their race or their color you could be, if you were found guilty, fined $100 and court costs.

We did some very interesting things on this. I remember the case of a man who was running a Cocktail Lounge. He discriminated against Negroes and didn't want them in his place and he would ask them out. We always had people of good will of all races and creeds who were busy working with us. A white member of our Alameda County Branch went with a Negro member who was refused and he acted as a witness. The owner was found guilty and after that, Negroes went in his place. He at first was very arrogant and he said, "Oh, he didn't mind paying $100. It was worth it to keep 'Niggers' out of his place." But he got so many cases that he came to the Board of Directors of the NAACP and pleaded with us (I was there at that Board meeting.) He pleaded with us not to fine him any more and said his doors were open. He said that this was ruining him, about to put him out of business, and that his place was open to all and that he welcomed us and so forth. So even though this was a very small fine plus the cost of court, it did act as a deterrent in many cases where we could prove that they did discriminate and refused to give service because of race.

Pittman: So public accommodations such as restaurants, hotels and motels were a very big thing, high on the agenda then. It was a long time before we could get restaurants, hotels, and motels (motels were the worst) opened to Negroes because they would say that they were full and you'd have a very difficult time finding out (the people were coming and going), but we did the same thing with them. A Negro couple would go in and ask for a room and they'd say that they didn't have any. Right behind them a white couple would go in and many times that white couple was an NAACP couple and they would get a room. The owner would then be fined. Then we had our public accommodation law that was strengthened when we had the FEPC law passed. Today there are very few places which are open to the public that will discriminate against people, unless for some other reason, but their color is not the reason. If they are white and they are boisterous or drunk or something of that sort, they can be barred from a place. We absolutely opened up public accommodations in this country. Of course we have opened them up even in Mississippi and the deep south, so you know we have opened them up here. But it was a very big thing at that time.

Henderson: When was the Civil Rights Law passed?

Pittman: The Civil Rights Law was passed, I guess it must have been mid-'30's that we were working on passing that law. This pertained to places of public accommodation and we worked very hard on that. It was very hard to get that passed as many of the men in the legislature were conservative and reactionary. They didn't want to pass it. Oh, we had a terrible time trying to get it passed.

Henderson: Did you do any lobbying in Sacramento?

Pittman: A great deal of lobbying. I've done a lot of lobbying. We lobbied on this bill.

You see, all of the legislators come home and they have offices in the county. We went to Sacramento when the bill would be up for hearing, but we worked on the legislators when they would come home on either weekends or vacations, because most of them were home every weekend. We waited on them and worked with them and tried to persuade them, and then if they would not vote our program or were very hostile to us, when they were up for re-election we lobbied against them then and we tried to see that we would get a candidate that would be for this legislation. We finally did get the bill passed.

Henderson: Were there any legislators who were particularly strong against this statute?

Pittman: Yes, I don't have the names of them right now. If I would see them I'd know them but I can't think who our legislators were.

Henderson: It is just the names of some people which stay in your mind.

Pittman: I know they do, and they would stay in mine. I just haven't reviewed who they were for so long that I can't think right now. I need the roster.

Henderson: OK. Did you serve on the NAACP Educational Committee?

Pittman: Our forces were rather limited in Alameda County. We had a very strong branch but obviously our branch would not have the large number of members as the Chicago, New York or Atlanta branches, or some of the other big places because at this time that we're talking about, there was quite a small black population in the Bay Area.

Hend[illegible]: We're talking about the '30's, aren't we?

Pittman: Yes, in the '30's. We didn't get the big influx of Negroes until World War II when we got people coming in to work in the shipyards and that was in the '40's. But in the '30's the population hadn't burgeoned like it did later. It just mushroomed after this. The whole population began to grow and particularly the black group came in.

So we had a number of key people in the NAACP branch. If they were not employed or if they were employed and they had the time, there was this big thrust to try to get some of these things done because we could begin to see where we were going. The average black citizen of the Bay Area had come from the South, one of the thirteen Southern states, and they could see the vestiges of discrimination here, that California was going to be exactly like Texas, Arkansas, Alabama and Georgia and every place else if we didn't do something and try to work at it very hard and try to expedite it, too. We were trying to get it done as quickly as possible. This was the thing; it was just like going up against a big stone wall and you had no facilities to push that wall down. So it was a very hard job.

I set out to say that we key people who were on several committees and if you were an officer - a president, a vice-president, a secretary (all of which I was at one time or another) -- then you would be an ex-officio member of all these committees, and you were working to try to direct the committee or to help formulate some of the policies of the committee so that you could make a thrust in this area. I was on the Membership Committee and ran a number

Pittman: of membership drives. I was on the Labor and Industry Committee and worked with the Fire Department, particularly I did a big job with heading the Oakland Fire Department fight for integration.

Once you had this in your hands, even though you the next year might not be elected, you might go on to another committee but you had so much background and experience in the particular field where you were that you more or less sort of stayed on with that committee. So most of the time we had people because we had rather a small membership at the time. We didn't have as many people as we did in the later years. A number of us -- particularly people that were officers, conspicuous officers -- were on several of these committees. So, as I've said, I was on the Labor and Industry Committee, the Education Committee and, of course, there was no committee really in the whole association that as a lay leader I did not work on at one time or another.

But particularly I was working with the schools trying to get black teachers in the schools, and on the Labor and Industry Committee trying to do something about jobs. When we got around to the war years then we were working very hard because the cry went out that there would be no black people that would work in Kaiser Shipyards, and Kaiser Shipyards was the big employer. There were other employers but no one that was as conspicuous or that was doing the work or sending out the recruiting like Kaiser Shipyards was. So they were saying that they would not hire any black people because they had no place to house them. There was war housing but they weren't going to let any Negroes live in the war housing. So this

Pittman: became, of course, one of our very, very big fights. I worked very directly on that problem with Mr. C. L. Dellums and Henry Johnson who died a couple of years ago, and a number of our people who were here, such as, Attorney John Drake, and just any number of persons who were here and very conspicuous people. Walter Gordon was very instrumental in working with the Police Department and the Fire Department and he himself was an attorney and had been the first black policeman in Berkeley. He was very conversant with the whole situation that had to do with the police and this kind of thing. So I did work on that. It was a very, very big job. We tried very hard. It was hard work. We'd meet no less than once a week and we'd generally meet at night because most of our people worked and they could not meet in the afternoon.

Our open public meetings were always on Sunday afternoon. We met for many, many years from church to church. We had a schedule set up and the schedule was laid out for the year. We would in the North Oakland Baptist Church then at Taylor Memorial Church, and then at Beth Eden. We made the rounds of the churches according to schedule. We also met at First A.M.E. Church which used to be the old 15th Street Church.

Henderson: What did you do at the public meetings?

Pittman: At the public meetings the committees would report on whatever action we needed and it would have to be endorsed and concurred with and voted by the general membership. For instance, if we were to vote that we would like the boycott of a certain store, whatever it was, we would bring in all the information, answer questions and then the general membership would vote to either go with the recommendation of the committee or not to go with it and to turn it down.

Pittman: So everything had to be voted on by the general membership.

Henderson: What strategy did you use to get firemen employed? You said that you worked very hard on that.

Pittman: We worked very hard with the Oakland city manager. The city manager was the key man. Then we worked with the battalion chiefs and the fire chief himself. We were really building pressure for equal opportunity for our firemen and we did it by working through the Fire Department itself, the head of the Fire Department, which is the fire chief who is responsible to the city manager, and in this instance it was in Oakland. We also didn't have any Negro firemen in Berkeley. We were working on Oakland and we still have only one or two in Berkeley. It was in Oakland where they had the eight or ten men, perhaps a dozen men, that were all segregated in Engine 22, which was where they put all of the Negroes as they came into the Oakland department. They did not allow any of them to be appointed and go to any fire engine house except that particular house. That was a black house and it was a black facility inside the Fire Department, you see.

Henderson: And so the NAACP was trying to break up this segregation?

Pittman: Yes, trying to get them out and to get those men placed in other units of the Fire Department, any place over the city. Finally, of course, we were successful and got Engine 22 put out of commission. All the men were reassigned, one here, one there, another two - all over the city of Oakland.

Henderson: Do you have any idea around what time Engine 22 was broken up?

Pittman: Engine 22 wasn't broken up, I would say, until the '40's. We were

Pittman: working on it all this time. We were actually working on it for 15 or 20 years. Unbelievable! It is unbelievable! But at any rate, these are the facts of the case.

Henderson: When was the first Negro teacher hired?

Pittman: Miss Ida Jackson was the first Negro teacher hired at Prescott School in Oakland. She is still living, but has been in rather poor health. She's been retired for a number of years and lives out in East Oakland. She would be an interesting person for you to talk to.

Henderson: I understand that she was hired as early as 1925. Would you say that?

Pittman: At this time I don't recall the date. I was on campus then, and she was, too. You see she was back doing graduate work. She came here as a graduate of New Orleans University. I think her university became either Dillard or Xavier later on, one or the other. At any rate, she came to California. She had taught in the South before she came here. She received her A.B. degree from the University of California in 1922 and she was back at the University doing graduate work when I first came to the Berkeley campus.

Henderson: Why was the Education Committee set up?

Pittman: Well, the Education Committee was set up to try to do something about the schools generally. You see, the schools were just notorious for not giving Negro students an opportunity to take a college preparatory course. Of course the counselling has remained poor right down through the years, but at one time it was scandulous.

We were trying to work with the school authorities to see that Negroes <u>were</u> given the courses and given the opportunity to prepare

Pittman: to go to college. Now if they couldn't go, that was going to be another thing, but those whose parents could afford to send them to college found that they were not eligible because they had been sidetracked in taking many needed subjects. They didn't have college preparatory courses that would enable them to be ready for entrance examinations or to enter the various colleges and universities in the area. So we were working with the schools, trying to get them not to discriminate against the Negro students.

We had all kinds of trouble. We had black-face plays that were given. We had Uncle Tom's Cabin and people were blacked up in it. We had Topsey and Eva, and Topsey was blacked up; it wasn't even a Negro student that was taking the part of Topsey because one of the places where you were discriminated against a great deal was in the dramatics department of the schools. It was just unheard of for Negroes to be in the school play - well, I mean unless they had some big chorus. But as far as taking a regular speaking part of something, that was just out. Our Education Committee was very, very instrumental in breaking up Black-Faced Minstrels. The Elks Club, not the black Elks but the white Elks, had, at one time, a yearly Minstrel Show. It was a Black-Face Minstrel Show. Finally an Attorney General wrote an opinion that no school building could house or have a Black-Face Minstrel or any entertainment where any race was ridiculed, that this was against the policy of the schools, and that they couldn't use the auditoriums. Well, we had a time trying to stop Black-Face Minstrels. Our Education Committee worked hard on trying to keep the theatre producers from showing The Birth of a Nation because it was a hate play and it was a very racist film.

Pittman: We worked hard on The Birth of a Nation to try to keep it from being shown. So the Education Committee was doing all of these things. For years we were trying to get "Negroes" spelled with a capital "N." We were going to the papers and trying to keep them from playing up cuttings, scrapes, rapes and naming "This was a black." It is very interesting today, where we have taken the step and we've gone back to wanting to be referred to as "black" when we fought so hard to keep from having this denominator or this designation placed behind the name of persons of color, particularly Negroes, you see, because this then played it up: "It was a black man that was doing this," or a "black girl" or a "black boy." We were fighting very hard against that because it prejudiced people against us. This made the public feel that we were sort of a sub-culture, because the papers didn't play up anything that was good. Of course you'd think that no Negro ever married or died or anything else because unless it was someone very, very important, it never got in the news. Oh well, death notices have to come out and be published but other than that, there would be no notice of it. It was unheard of to have a Negro wedding picture in the paper. I mean, that was just out of the question!

Finally we got a Miss Delilah Beasley, who went to work for the Tribune, and we had a Negro page in the paper. I don't know precisely where Miss Beasley's native home was,but she was here in the early twenties. She didn't die, I don't think, until around probably the last of the forties or early fifties. I think she had been trained as a journalist. She had come from some place in the East. I think it was Ohio. She had done quite a bit of

Pittman: writing and editing and so forth and was quite a woman of letters. So she was given the position by the Oakland Tribune to write the Sunday page of the news about Negroes. They had a page then in the Oakland Tribune that would give some of the happenings. Before they had that, you know, perhaps there would be nothing about Negroes.

Henderson: Was this also in the '30's that this page was run?

Pittman: Yes, it was going on in the '30's. Maybe the very last of the '20's even, and in the middle of the '30's she was writing this page.

VIII. The Negro Educational Council: Negroes in the News

Pittman: This was the reason why the Negro Educational Council of the East Bay, a group of ten people, banded themselves together in 1935 to put on a radio program, Negroes in the News. Now the whole intent behind that was that if we should get on the air, we would be able to offset this lack of news and report constructive news about Negroes by having a weekly program that people could listen to and actually hear something other than that someone had cut someone and been arrested in a crap game or something like that. Mr. C. L. Dellums was the chairman and I was the secretary. We had other people: the treasurer, Mrs. Lilly Wilkerson who is now deceased, E. S. Thomas who was a member of the committee, George Towns who had his master's degree and was one of our first students to graduate from Stanford University, and a number of people who banded themselves together to put this program on. Actually, we were able to go to Mr. Stuart Warner of Warner Brothers. There were three brothers that ran a record and music shop with radios, recorders and this kind of thing. But they also owned a radio station. They owned station KLS; those were the call letters.

Pittman: It was a very small station, but they owned it. They were quite religious people, so mostly they were programming religious programs. They were emanating from a temple out on 10th avenue and had various religious groups - not Negroes. I am now talking about white religious groups that were having broadcasts at that time. So we asked about getting just a small bit of time. We wanted a block of fifteen minutes to put on this program.

Mr. Warner consented and said we could do it. He said that we would have to pay a stipend for the air time. This is why we had to have some sponsors. So we got Baker Mortuary, Edward J. Wilson Insurance Agency when he formed his company, and several other sponsors. Then it was decided by the group that I would be the commentator. We gathered news from the Associated Negro Press and from church announcements and civic groups' announcements in the area. We knew Leon Washington of the Los Angeles Sentinel very well and received his paper. This was a weekly program so we didn't have to be gathering news every day. Of course Los Angeles was the hub of whatever was being done west of the Rockies as far as Negroes were concerned and we had access to The Sentinel and another paper that was a very old one. It is out of existence now, The Los Angeles Eagle. We had these two papers that we received regularly, along with the Pittsburgh Courier, the Chicago Defender, and the Amsterdam News. All of these papers we subscribed to and more. Also we had access to the Negro press releases that Claude Barnett and his group put out.

So with the local news and this coverage that we got of California and the national scene we were able then to take out

Pittman: sort of a cross-section of the news and present it every Sunday morning. Now this was the way the radio program began thirty-five years ago and it has never ceased to exist. The reason we wanted to call it Negroes in the News was because we wanted people to know that it was exactly that: Negroes in the news. We were stressing, not just news, but Negroes in the news, so we could hear about what we were doing on a local, national and statewide level.

Now that's the way that began. It was a completely volunteer group. Nobody was paid - not even the commentator. I never was paid. But we got enough money from our sponsors to pay the station for the time. I did it just as a hobby. I had had several courses in radio in my college work and I was anxious to do this because this was sort of like a laboratory that I could use in connection with doing the work that I had done in several courses. So that is how Negroes in the News began.

Henderson: And it hasn't changed?

Pittman: It hasn't changed. Dellums has remained the chairman. Mrs. Lilly Wilkerson died and Mr. Dellums then became the chairman-treasurer. Mrs. Frankie Jones belongs to it. Mr. E. S. Thomas is still living, and a number of our members are still in existence. We would meet now and then and have a little session about what we have done and what we are doing.

But is is a self-sustaining kind of group, and their function was never anything else other than Negroes in the News. They never did take on any other project.

Henderson: Of course you've changed stations now.

Pittman: The station's call numbers changed. KLS was sold to a group that changed the call numbers to KWBR. It was KWBR for maybe fifteen or so of these years. Then it became KDIA because another station bought it and it belongs to the Sunderling chain. These call numbers were changed but it was the same station changing call numbers as a result of changing ownership. It's the same place on radio dial. They were buying the station and its wave length and everything that went with it. So it remained 1310 on the dial. That is where it is today.

Henderson: When you first began as commentator, did Miss Beasley serve as a reference person for you?

Pittman: No, we were always independent of her. She was doing other kinds of things - writing for some of the clubs. I'm going to try to find my copy of Lifting as They Climb. Miss Beasley had been quite a nice-looking woman and she had a very interesting love story. It was really something.

She had been, she said, engaged to Colonel Charles Young, who was the first Negro colonel in the United States Army and the third Negro to graduate from West Point. Lots of people have heard of Colonel Young. Miss Beasley was quite a gentlewoman. She was someone who would stand out in your mind and you would remember. She was thin, with soft hair - quite a character. She was something else; always Miss Beasley and she never married. When that Colonel Young thing broke up, why then she never did marry.

Henderson: Did she serve as president of the Association of Colored Women's Clubs?

Pittman: No, she was never the president. I never knew Miss Beasley to be the head of anything. Here is Miss Beasley in this picture. She was sort of an Indian-looking woman.

Henderson: She had beautiful eyes.

Pittman: Yes, she had been very beautiful I am sure as a girl. I saw her as a mature woman and then as an older woman. She was always alone. Well, she lived with people in their homes. You know we didn't have apartments then like we have now. You know, you had housekeeping privileges and you roomed with some one. She roomed with a Masengale family for many, many years on 35th Street in Oakland, right off of Market Street. I'd see her at different functions but I never knew her to head an organization.

There is a write-up by her in Lifting as They Climb. She wrote the history of the big national convention of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs held in Oakland in 1926. She was very active then. She wrote and covered this story for the Tribune. She covered the national convention in 1926 as their chief reporter. According to records she was writing and publishing as early as 1919.

That was the first time that a group of Negro women chartered a train and came across country with this big entourage of Negro women and they ended up in Oakland. It was a big, big affair. The Oakland Municipal Auditorium over by the lake was new at that time, and that is where they held their convention.

Mary McLeod Bethune was the national president and she absolutely electrified people. They came from all around to hear

Pittman: Mary McLeod Bethune because she was the national president and she was so eloquent. You were just spellbound listening to her. So Delilah Beasley covered that event!

Henderson: She had a column in the Tribune at that time.

Pittman: The Tribune did a document on it, a resume. Now I haven't seen that resume. You see, at that time I was of course in school and I was not as active in the community as I became ten years later. I was very young at the time and I didn't know too much about club work. I knew the people that were in it -- Mrs. Wall who founded the Fanny Wall Children's Home, and other people, but I wasn't really helping to direct anything at that time or working directly with the association in a grassroots way where I would know too much about it.

But Miss Beasley covered the national convention for the Tribune and they put out some type of report in capsule form -- a little brochure. I didn't get to see it, but no doubt the Tribune has it, because they did it. After that was over they compiled the happenings of the convention, because it was something that they had never heard of. All of the women -- really the brains of the nation as far as Negro women were concerned -- were here at the national meeting in 1926. So the paper was just sort of dumbfounded about this whole thing and they compiled a resume.

Henderson: I see. When did you feel it was necessary to break up the NAACP into smaller branches? I know that at first there were very few people in the Alameda County Branch.

Pittman: I intimated that we were working with the legislature and with city councils and all. Well, by 1956 we had gotten such an influx

Pittman: of people into the state and into this section that we now had a sizeable group in Berkeley, the city of Alameda, and Oakland. It became too confusing for the same committee to try to get all the information about, let's say, the schools in Berkeley and make a presentation to the Berkeley Board of Education. Then we would have to get all the information about Oakland and make a presentation to the Oakland Board of Education and likewise to Alameda. So the Alameda County Branch, after a great deal of thought and working on it, petitioned the national head to have the three cities of Alameda County have three distinct charters, forming three distinct branches. This was what it was: the work had gotten heavy and it was just too much for the various committees to try to work and get the information and receive the complaints from the various cities. So we then decided that the only way we could work effectively was to have three distinct chapters, one in Berkeley, one in Oakland, and one in Alameda. We founded them and divided the membership. We went down the roster and took the Alameda members and made them the nucleus of the Alameda Branch, likewise Oakland and Berkeley.

Henderson: Did you join the Berkeley Branch?

Pittman: I joined the Berkeley Branch. But in 1956 when this was done, I, by that time, had become a national officer of the NAACP and was supervising all the branches. I had gone into the Regional Office in 1952.

TAREA PITTMAN INTERVIEW #4

October 21, 1971

Joyce Henderson, Interviewer

IX. Fair Employment Practices Legislation in California

Henderson: Did the NAACP take the leadership in getting an FEPC bill passed in California?

Pittman: Yes, they did. That's true.

Henderson: In what year was it first introduced?

Pittman: Well, there had been a bill introduced in the assembly in 1945, but the introduction of the bill that finally was voted into law in 1959 began in June of 1953. It was not until 1953 that the bill was introduced in the assembly by Assemblyman W. Byron Rumford with a number of other legislators including Augustus Hawkins. W. Byron Rumford and Augustus Hawkins were co-authors of the bill and there were a number of other legislators who joined them.

Henderson: If the bill was first introduced in the legislature in 1953, for what do we remember the year 1945?

Pittman: There were various attempts to get legislation. The 1945 effort was a bill that was introduced into the assembly and, more or less, it was not a strong bill or the bill that we wished to see, but it was a statement of policy and this kind of thing. It could not pass; it simply was one of the early efforts. But in 1953, after statewide meetings in 1952 and after we declared it to be on the agenda of NAACP to get this type of legislation enacted, this was the biggest effort that had been made and it was a cooperative

Pittman: one with church, labor, social and civic groups coming together to work together to get this particular bill passed. NAACP had a commitment for a strong civil rights bill. In other words, that meant one that had sanctions and enforcement provisions.

Many of the bills that were enacted early in this field were just statements of policy and so forth, but they had no enforcement power. NAACP had a mandate to support a bill, to have a bill written that would have enforcement powers. Earlier, Assemblyman Agustus Hawkins took the leadership in this field with other men concurring. Then every other year the other Negro assemblyman, W. Byron Rumford, would sponsor the legislation and be joined by the others.

In 1953 Mr. Rumford took the leadership with the bill and we had quite a stormy time indeed. It was a rugged thing that we were trying to do because it was to the moderates and the conservatives at that time very "far-out" legislation. There were those who contended that the defeat of the 1946 FEPC statewide initiative meant that the majority of the people of the state did not want it, and they said that was a mandate from the people. This was one of the reasons why they didn't want to vote it into law. It was one of the things that they fell back on.

Henderson: How do you interpret what happened in 1946? Do you think it was a mandate of the people?

Pittman: I think that it showed the extent to which the state of California was subject to discrimination and segregation and the forces that were at work to keep racial minorities from having their full citizenship rights. It simply showed that we had a state that was filled

Pittman: with Southerners and other people that were in sympathy with undemocratic forces - let me put it like that. It just showed how difficult it was going to be for us to get the votes to get this enacted into law. I think that it is safe to say, without fear of contradiction, that the 1953 effort was a coalition of the various facets of our organizational structure in the state, headed by the FEPC committee. We had leadership from all of the principal areas that were concerned with this - greater than we had before or since. We have never had an effort like this in which we came together statewide. We came together in the northern area and southern area of the state. Then, we worked out of the Capitol in Sacramento. For the first time we had a lobbyist that stayed in Sacramento full time.

Henderson: Who was that?

Pittman: I was the lobbyist. Then we had other people. We called mobilizations and the grassroots people themselves lobbied. But we had a person registered and acting as the lobbyist.

Henderson: What did you have to do as a lobbyist?

Pittman: As a lobbyist I was in the Capitol working with the author of the bill, working with the Speaker of the two houses, generally working to find out when this particular bill was before the Committee on Ways and Means. I was trying to find out and acquaint myself with the procedures as to when this bill would be called up and be called before committee. Sometimes it was very difficult to find out in advance. Then, once I found out, it was my job to alert all of the co-chairman that we had throughout the state so that they

Pittman: could come to the hearing. Once they set those hearings then it was my job to see that our people, that is, those that were working on the committee, would get to Sacramento for the hearings and give testimony.

I also gave testimony in connection with this at all the hearings. We had other spokesmen at that time. Franklin Williams was our NAACP regional director and he was a very vocal and brilliant speaker himself. He, of course, gave testimony. We had testimony from the chairman of our West Coast Regional Legal Committee, who still is the same man, Attorney Nathaniel Colley of Sacramento. He was a very able spokesman who spoke on the effect and the legal aspects of the bill. Mr. Dellums was another very able spokesman. He was a very brilliant speaker also, and, as the vice-president of an international labor union, he, of course, gave very valuable testimony in connection with labor aspects of it.

It wasn't just Negroes who testified. We had many, many other people in the field of labor, the church - both Catholic and Protestant - the Friends had a lobby. Labor had a lobby. The Friends had an official lobby and they included FEPC in their program along with other subjects that they were interested in and other peoples that they were interested in. So we would meet with sort of a cross-section of lobbyists, trying to map our strategy on what we would do and who we would call in to give the testimony, who would give certain phases of it and this kind of thing, so that we would cover the questions that would be asked. And of course we attempted to bring pressure to bear on the various legislators from our various NAACP

Pittman: branches located where these legislators lived and we did some very strategic work there. The lobbyists would contact people in the local community to try to build up support for the bill.

Lobbying was a very hard job. Legislators were very hard to contact. If they knew you were trying to get them you almost had to run and waylay them in the halls. They wouldn't see you because naturally they were not anxious to tell you they wouldn't vote for the bill and they were trying to get out from under pressure - that is if they were those legislators who lived in areas where they didn't want to have anything to do with this bill.

So it was a very hard job. We were running up and down halls and trying to find out where the legislators were, running around early before they went to the floor, and trying to catch them when they came in at noon. Then you'd go to the floor if they declared a recess. If you were a certified Legislative Advocate, as they called it, you could go to the floor. We'd try to get some of the legislators during an intermission or as they left the floor or came back on the floor.

Now obviously this was not the best time in the world to get them, but when you were desperate, you had to have a lot of nerve and you had to have a lot of vigor about this. You simply had to try to get them any way you could. I was the Legislative Advocate for the Fair Employment Practices Committee, that was made up of a cross-section of organizations. But the heart of it was NAACP asking others to join with them. So I, at this particular time, was a lobbyist for the California Committee for Fair Employment Practices. I was then acting for the committee.

Henderson: And what was your job with the NAACP?

Pittman: I was a Field Secretary with them. But I put full time into this. I went to Sacramento and lived. I would come home to the Bay Area on occasion or perhaps on a weekend because most of the legislators went home on weekends. But mostly I stayed in Sacramento all week because we were so busy and were trying to do so many things.

Henderson: I wanted to ask you about the meeting at which the statewide committee was first formed on February 8, 1953. My notes say that it was formed in Fresno.

Pittman: Yes.

Henderson: And that the meeting was called by a man named Anthony Ramuglia. Do you remember him?

Pittman: No, it wasn't called by him. I don't know where we got that from.

Henderson: From a news clipping.

Pittman: Maybe he was the head of one of the labor unions. He was of the CIO.

Henderson: The CIO Industrial Council.

Pittman: Yes, all right. He called the members of his union - he and John Despol. John Despol was the secretary-treasurer. I believe Ramuglia was the statewide president of it. Now they made the call for their unions statewide and the NAACP made the call for theirs. The Jewish community and the Amalgamated Clothiers made a call for theirs. In other words, all these people made a call. Sue Adams was the co-chairman for AFL. See, this was before the AFL-CIO joined together. So it was not the AFL-CIO as it now is. I see where this was in here, in this news clipping. And it does give the inference that the committee was formed with the announced purpose of attaining passage of FEPC, and I see it says "at a

Pittman: meeting at the California Hotel called by Anthony Ramuglia of the CIO."

You see, representatives of more than a dozen leading organizations organized themselves into a permanent committee. But Ramuglia made the call for his union. This is a misleading statement. It says he made the call for representatives of more than a dozen leading organizations. But he made the call for more than a dozen CIO unions and they came in from all over the state. He was only one person and he was never one of the conspicuous people. Sue Adams was very, very active. Ed Roybal, who was at that time a councilman in Los Angeles and now is a congressman in the House of Representatives, made the call for CSO, which is Community Service Organizations representing what now would be a Chicano group. He represented the Mexican-American community. And the California Federation for Civic Unity was a statewide organization. Irving Rosenblatt, the president of that organization, was one of the co-chairmen of the California Committee. There was a big, big representation and we met in Fresno after doing some preliminary work. We'd been meeting as a Northern California group and a Southern California group and then we were in this meeting galvanizing it and putting it together statewide.

One of the techniques that we voted to use was to have what we called a mobilization and it was the first meeting of that kind that had ever been held. There have been some others since then, but that was the first one, where we would call in the main membership of the sponsoring and co-sponsoring organizations and we would have them to come in to the Capitol itself in Sacramento.

Pittman: We had a moblization for two days. When they came in we had workshops on how to lobby and how to go and see their congressmen, because they came in from all over the state. What they really were going to do was to go and see their representative. It might be their state senator or it might be their state assemblyman, and they were going to see them in their offices. Most of them had made appointments to see them before they left home, so that they would have an opportunity to do this. Then on Sunday afternoon we called a big mass meeting at one of the largest churches in Sacramento, adjacent to the Capitol grounds, and had Mr. Rumford and Gus Hawkins and a number of other legislators who were co-authoring the bill with Rumford and Hawkins to attend. We tried to let people know why we had to have the bill, what abuses there were in the field of employment, and this kind of thing.

There were those who felt that we needed to include the field of housing. They said they went hand-in-hand. We knew that there was gross discrimination in housing. But we realized that it added to our difficulty in trying to get the legislation on the books because there were delegates to the mobilization who would go off on a tangent and they wouldn't like what was being said about the housing, and would just cause a lot of confusion. So to keep that down and to realize that if we went in and got it in the field of employment, then later we could go into the field of housing. This is what we did. This is what was done and this caused us a lot of work to get that clarified.

Pittman: There were many organizations that felt that the mobilization would be just a big group that would be up in Sacramento and would cause a lot of confusion. They thought that there may be violence amd that would cause a lot of difficulties. But the mobilization was very,very well-disciplined. The people knew what they were to do and we had a sargeant-at-arms and people that were responsible for seeing about the delegations from certain areas and it really was so well-planned! We had done so much. There was an understanding by some of the delegates - sort of an underground thing - that it was going to be taken over by the left-wing, by the Communists, and that they planned to infiltrate it. But we only accepted delegates from those organizations with whom NAACP affiliates. We had a national policy that we could not affiliate with self-asserted Communists groups. So this meant that we did not have to accept any delegates except from organizations with whom we affiliated. That was the meaning of that.

Hendersnn: Were there many left-wing organizations that wanted to join?

Pittman: Well, we never did know how many wanted to. We simply took the affirmative action that we would not accept any delegates from any organizations that were on the Attorney General's list of subversive organizations at that time that our national office gave us, that we could not and would not work with. We were just working in the affirmative and we did not have to meet that problem.

Henderson: So the first mobilization took place in 1953?

Pittman: That's right. In March of 1953.

Henderson: Who, do you think, was responsible for thinking of such an idea of everybody coming there, marching on Sacramento.

Pittman: Well, I would say that it came out of the Policy Committee of the West Coast Regional Office under the chairmanship of Mr. Dellums and the staff which included Franklin Williams, Lester Bailey and myself. The chairmen of the various statewide NAACP committees were also active in this regard These included the legal committee co-chaired by Loren Miller and Nathaniel Colley, and the labor committee chaired by William Pollard. You see, we actually authored the bill. We wrote it. Finally, Mr. Rumford handled the bill in 1959. I was telling you that he and Augustus Hawkins alternated with handling the bill. In '53, it seems to me that Gus Hawkins was there and I believe that he was the prime handler - although with Rumford - and then in '59 it was Rumford.

Henderson: That's right. AB 900 in 1953 was introduced by Gus Hawkins.

Pittman: Yes.

Henderson: Does that mean that Hawkins handled it in 1955?

Pittman: Yes, every other year it was Assemblyman Hawkins and W. Byron Rumford who took the leadership. But when we finally got it passed in 1959 Rumford was the author and he was joined by co-authors, about twelve or fourteen men.

Henderson: Do you remember any senators during the '50's who were particularly in favor of the bill?

Pittman: We had great difficulty with the bill. We had a difficult time everywhere but particularly in the Senate. Hugh Burns was the leader of the Senate and the speaker. He was very anti-FEPC and he gave us a very difficult time as did also the senator from

Pittman: Vallejo -- oh, isn't that ridiculous! I'm having as much trouble with his name as we had with him!

Henderson: Was his name Luther Gibson?

Pittman: Luther Gibson, of course! How could I ever forget.

Henderson: He was also against the housing bill later on.

Pittman: Oh, he just offered all kinds of opposition and it was very difficult for us. Now I am trying to think who the principal senator was that carried the ball over in the Senate. Oh, Richards. Richard Richards of Los Angeles was a young, brilliant attorney and a very able spokesman. We only have one Negro in the state senate today. At that time,of course, we had none. Milton Marks of San Francisco was an able and forthright advocate of the legislation and a Republican. We had a number of men that did help with it and it was quite a chore to get it through.

Henderson: What interest did Governor Earl Warren show in the committee's efforts to get an FEPC?

Pittman: It is very interesting that although there were those who claimed that Governor Warren was not against the bill, he would not come to the mobilization or speak, and he would not see our delegation. We tried very hard to meet with him and to ask that he use his influence to get the bill through. But this he never did - publicly. And it is very interesting that I saw a news release that wanted Eisenhower to talk to our governor. But he wouldn't because the Republicans, you see, had the state, and they were in ascendancy in the legislature, both houses, as well as having the Republican governor. I do remember very, very clearly that the committee

Pittman: which was putting on the big mobilization pleaded with Governor Warren to come to the meeting and speak and give his approval to FEPC, and to do what he could do, and so forth. That he would not do. We didn't have a press conference or a conference with him ever on FEPC.

Now we did have conferences with Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown. We had conferences with him and he would see the statewide committee. He set up the appointment and people came in from all over the state to meet with him. So we definitely had a commitment from him and we had him saying even as a campaign pledge that he was pledged to it. He felt FEPC was morally right and that discrimination based on race or sex or national origin was immoral and this kind of thing. But we never had any conference like that with Warren.

The only time I saw Governor Warren and was in his presence was when he was making statements or doing anything publicly was on the occasion of holidays, national holidays, state holidays. That's the only time that I saw him.

Henderson: This was when you were stationed in Sacramento?

Pittman: Well, this was before, before I was there and during the time I was there. This was when I would see him. Of course I remember having seen him in the courthouse in Alameda and I saw him as district attorney for Alameda County.

Henderson: Were you working with the NAACP then?

Pittman: Oh yes, I was a member of NAACP, because I was a member of NAACP from my earliest days here, which went back to my student days when I first came here to U.C. from Bakersfield.

Henderson: I was just wondering what you were doing that took you into the courthouse.

Pittman: Well, I can't remember clearly what the cases were, but I think we were trying to ban showings of Birth of a Nation and we were trying to get an order from the district attorney's office that this motion picture was un-American and that the showing of the picture would create racial tension and many things like this. We also were in the district attorney's office trying to get him to order the Board of Education to cancel the use of the school auditoriums for blackface minstrels. So this is what we were doing there.

And we had a case, I think it was an extradition case. I can't remember the full details of it. We had a man that had escaped from a chain gang in either Georgia or Alabama. It seems to me it was some place in Georgia. He was found, picked up in Oakland, arrested and was going to be extradited back to the state where he was wanted. We got information about the crime that he committed, which was so trivial that it was just a pity that he had been in a penitentiary for all those years. We contended that if he did go back he could never receive a fair trial and that it probably might mean his life, since he had dared to escape. We were there trying to prevail upon the district attorney to recommend that he act so that the man wouldn't be returned.

Henderson: Do you remember the outcome?

Pittman: I think that the man was returned. I don't think that we kept him from being extradited.

But you were asking me how I knew Warren and when I saw him. Of course we knew who he was. He was always a man whose looks

Pittman: were extraordinary enough -- or at least not the run-of-the-mill -- so that you could point him out in a crowd. It wasn't because he was such a large man, and still he wasn't a small man either. But there was something about his bearing and his face that you could mark him in a crowd. And we would see him going up to the games in Berkeley, particularly a game like Big Game Day, when people were coming in from all over. And we continued to see him because he would make it out for the big games, even while he was on the court, and we saw him several times with his wife.

Henderson: Do you remember how he responded to the NAACP when they asked that minstrel shows be abandoned?

Pittman: At the time most people did not see that this was in any way hurting Negroes or that it was derogatory. Later there was a public policy enunciated by the state attorney general's office. Stanley Mosk was the attorney general and he had a policy written that no auditorium could be used for blackface minstrels any place in the state. It was against the policy of the state and it did create tension and gave a feeling of great inferiority and did great harm to the Negro students and other minorities, but particularly to Negro students. It was against the policy of the state. So finally we did get this ruling. But we did not get that ruling while Earl Warren was the district attorney.

Henderson: In 1959, did you talk to Hugh Burns and Luther Gibson, opponents of FEPC, face-to-face.

Pittman: Oh my, yes! We had many conferences with them. They were simply adamant. They felt that discrimination was not that widespread.

Pittman: They felt that this should never, never be written into law, that it should be a voluntary thing, that people should never be made to do these kinds of things, that it was overstepping the bounds. They felt it was unconstitutional and they were very hostile when you met them, very hostile!

Henderson: Were they hostile toward you?

Pittman: They were hostile in their attitude. They wouldn't talk about throwing me out of their offices or use any profane language or do anything that was untoward. It was just that they were so adamant in their position and they were of course just dyed-in-the-wool segregationists. They just did not believe in this legislation and they were not going to do one thing for it. In fact, they were going to do everything they could to fight it - and they did. They just organized. Hugh Burns, being the leader of the Senate, was influential. We even brought to Sacramento people who were their constituents and that didn't do any good, because in the first place, in Fresno County Negroes at that time were not the balance of power. Burns knew that he could not be taken out of office by minority groups, and the same was true of Luther Gibson in Vallejo, in Solano County. So they didn't really care. You could not make them yield to any kind of talk that when their term was up they would be defeated because they knew that they had the support. Hugh Burns was backed by the Associated Farmers and had such deep involvement with conservatives that he knew he would be re-elected.

Henderson: Throughout the years, what groups were testifying against you before the committees?

Pittman: There were many, many individuals and let me see, I think we had strong opposition from the State Chamber of Commerce and the California Apartment House Owners organization, and there were many ad hoc committees that were set up expressly to fight against the enactment of this legislation like the San Mateo Committee Against FEPC and other organizations of this kind which came into being specifically to try to beat this legislation. We had conspicuous opposition from many of the clergy even though we did have the support of organizations like the Conference for Christians and Jews. We had some of the leading rabbis and bishops of the Catholic church and heads of the Protestant denominations in support. Still there were other people that were in the denominations that were individually opposed to it. There were some of the individual churchmen themselves that were very opposed to it.

Henderson: Did you become a lobbyist through election or appointment?

Pittman: I was elected at the Fresno meeting to act as the Executive Secretary for FEPC and I was going to be released for the whole legislative session from any duties as the Field Secretary for NAACP, other than those which revolved around our activity with the passage of FEPC legislation. At that point it was recognized that in order to go to the floor to do the job that we wanted done, I would have to be a Legislative Advocate and I would have to register with the Secretary of State's office to do this particular work. So I then was voted to be a Legislative Advocate as well as to be the Executive Secretary. I was the Executive Secretary of the California Committee for Fair Employment

Pittman: Practices. I was the person who was spearheading and helping to coordinate the whole thing.

Henderson: Was Bill Becker involved then in getting an FEPC?

Pittman: Bill Becker was very, very vocal. He himself was a Legislative Advocate for the Jewish Labor Committee. You see, he was well-known in the legislature and we knew him very well because he was on our labor committee of the West Coast NAACP Regional Policy Committee. So he was well-known to NAACP and he was very, very well-known having worked for a number of years directly in Sacramento. He knew these legislators by heart and that kind of thing.

Henderson: Do you think your job was particularly hard because you are a woman or do you think you got the same treatment that a man would get?

Pittman: I think I got the same treatment that a man would get.

TAREA PITTMAN INTERVIEW #5

February 24, 1972

Joyce Henderson, Interviewer

Pittman: In a field like FEPC or any of the other big civil rights campaigns that we have had, it is very difficult, no matter how long one works at it, to get statements or documents or other meaningful areas of communication that might give us a good view of the over-all areas because it was complicated. Many things that today, looking back fifteen or twenty years, might seem very trivial were then very meaningful things, and they were small pivotal things that were the foundation of the campaigns. We found that in the field of civil rights and in something that was controversial like the fair employment practices bill, that many men loathe to face up to their individual responsibility. But at the same time they want to claim that they are not bigots, that they are not biased, that they believe in fair play, that they believe in individual opportunity and group opportunity. Therefore, if it was a bill that was a state bill these persons would say that they feel that this was a matter of local option. A legislator, who was against FEPC, wanted to avoid being involved when we went to him personally because he felt that this would militate against him in getting votes. We have to remember that in all these things it is a balancing of power, trying to get votes and trying to stay in office. The "ins" are trying to stay in and the "outs" are trying to get in. It is just as simple as that in politics.

Pittman: Therefore the person would say, "Well this is not a matter for a city ordinance. This should be a state ordinance because it has statewide implication." So you were between the devil and the deep blue sea. You were jumping from pillar to post, depending upon what these people wanted to say to really evade the issue. Now we just can't be unsophisticated and not realize that this was the name of the game.

Today we do a lot of talking in the jargon and the rhetoric of the day which has to do with racism, but we've always had this and it has been very hard on minority groups because we have had to fight every inch of the way and always the campaign was stacked against us and they used this as a dodge. We have to understand that.

It would never be possible for us to really get a full overview of the work, the struggle, the amount of labor that it took and the fidelity that people had to really exhibit, to follow through, trying to get this matter of legislation on the books. I think that it a very good thing that we are documenting what was being done because already - take a person like me who was working directly in it - there are so many things, as I have indicated before, that are pivotal things that we now have lost sight of and they have just been lost. I was an official of the NAACP; we had no research department. Our primary officers that were coordinating the lay activities were so busy that many of the documentary vehicles that we had have simply been lost. We were so busy doing that we didn't record a number of things that in retrospect I can see were very important.

Pittman: We had no central files. Once the FEPC campaign was over the persons that were working in it scattered. There were people all alone like Bill Becker from the Jewish Labor Committee and Max Mont of the Jewish Labor Committee of Los Angeles who played a primary role just as though they were on the paid staff. Once the campaign was successful and we got the law written and it was signed and became a fact, we went to our various organizations and we were then knee-deep in what we were doing in other fields and following through with other types of legislative priorities that we had at the time.

Henderson: What was the first FEPC city ordinance passed?

Pittman: Well, Bakersfield's actually was the first city ordinance that was passed in the state of California. This was very interesting because not only Bakersfield proper has had a long history of being a very bigoted territory, territory where there had been a great deal of race discrimination exhibited, but also the city's environs like Taft and Maricopa and other places around. So this would have been one of the last places that one would have expected, first of all, to have a Negro elected to the city council, and second to have an ordinance like Fair Employment Practices passed. You would not expect this in a place like Bakersfield, if one had to choose.

Henderson: What was the name of the first Negro elected to the city council?

Pittman: Reverend Holstrom Collins, a minister of the A.M.E. church there in Bakersfield. Rev. Collins went to the city council and it was he who, under the aegis of the Bakersfield branch of NAACP, promoted and fought for the enactment of the Fair Employment Practice ordinance.

Pittman: We had a young attorney whose name was James Benjamin. He was the president of the Bakersfield branch of the NAACP. He was very, very alert and a strong civil rights advocate and he spearheaded the branch's drive for the Rev. Collins, espousing it and all. It really was the Bakersfield branch and I do feel that much credit had to go to this young attorney. He was victimized really because he did so much work in the field of civil rights. He was just a new attorney having practiced for a few years. He had gone to high school and had been reared in Bakersfield to some extent. I don't think he was a native of Bakersfield, but he had been there as a lad and he knew the need and some of the difficulties that we had faced. You know years ago, if you had a case of discrimination, black attorneys would not take it and it would just fall flat on its face, because no one would represent a person and there was no one to whom to turn. But when this young attorney came on the scene he would take these cases. There was practically no money involved in them at all for the attorney, and so I guess he just about starved to death in the beginning of his practice and it was at great sacrifice to himself personally. He married, and I believe he was married already at the time he was the president of the NAACP branch there. At the beginning he had a young wife and a young baby, and this of course was a very penalizing thing for him because it meant that he devoted long hours to the civil rights struggle and he made great personal sacrifices of time and money for himself and his family.

Henderson: After the FEPC ordinance was passed, was there then a commission set up?

Pittman: Well, there was not a paid commission. The ordinance itself was written into law as a policy provision and so forth. In Bakersfield the commission came about when we got the state bill passed.

Henderson: What did the city ordinance provide?

Pittman: The city ordinance provided that there could be no contracts that the city would let without including an opportunity for employment of all groups regardless of their race, their color, or their creed. This was unheard of. When we look back now we feel that it didn't have the enforcement power nor some of the other phases that we thought were as strong as they should be. But it was a strong, for the time, good statement of policy and was one of the first. You see we've moved in the direction of just taking it for granted that legislation would be written into law that would make the statement whether it had enforcement power or not. At that time you had to fight even to get the policy statement. It didn't provide for a paid commission. I believe that there was a clause, however, that called for penalties of so much if it were proven that the employer had discriminated on the basis of race, a certain monetary fine, and it could be and/or a jail sentence if the person were found guilty. So it wasn't that it didn't have any enforcement power. It didn't have a paid commission. I believe that there was a committee appointed that had the responsibility of reviewing the contracts and this kind of thing with the city. Maybe it was one of the city committees that had

Pittman: this power. It was so important because it was the first time an ordinance had ever been passed even making the statement.

Henderson: In what year was it passed?

Pittman: 1947.

Henderson: Do you think the fact that the governor at that time in California was from Bakersfield had any influence?

Pittman: No. None whatever. I do not believe that Governor Warren had anything whatsoever to do with the Bakersfield ordinance. It is hard to believe in the backdrop of how really liberal Governor Warren became, particularly when he went on the bench, but he was not liberal at that time. He grew to be very liberal and to have a very good understanding of the proscriptions and the difficulties that minority groups were having in connection with employment. But at this time he was not doing this and I don't think that he had any influence on the Bakersfield legislation at all. I feel that his influence was principally where he came to live in Alameda County and Berkeley where he graduated. Then of course I think the first time that we see him as a public figure was as the district attorney of Alameda County. Here he was one of the first people to exhibit some understanding of the need to include all people because he did appoint a black deputy in the district attorney's office and this was the first time that this had been done. He did this.

Henderson: Who did he appoint?

Pittman: It was John Bussey. He later became Judge John Bussey. This was interesting because John Bussey was from Bakersfield. Warren

Pittman: was very, very much concerned with and interested in Judge Walter Gordon, Sr., now retired from the governorship of the Virgin Islands. They were very, very close friends and they were, I think, closer together than any other black families that I know of that were associated with Warren. He and Walt Gordon were very fast friends and still are, I am sure. From the early days they were very fast friends and remained so through the years.

Henderson: I didn't know that John Bussey worked in the district attorney's office.

Pittman: Oh yes,he did,from 1945 - 1949.

Henderson: This was during the time that Warren was district attorney?

Pittman: During the time that Warren was the district attorney. So I see this as the first time that we see him moving in the direction of the inclusion into his professional life and in his spectrum the idea of including people of all racial groups, at least the largest minority in Alameda County, which,at that time was and I am sure still is, Negro , and he appointed a black deputy and that had not been done before.

Henderson: Did either of the foremost FEPC legislators, Byron Rumford and Augustus Hawkins, appear to have at least a casual relationship with Earl Warren?

Pittman: Of course, both of them knew him well. I would say that Byron Rumford knew him very, very intimately and well. Now I don't know that Gus Hawkins knew him as well as Byron. But of course he did know him and knew him very well. Warren was the governor

Pittman: of the state and they were both legislators. Gus Hawkins was in the legislature before Byron went in, and he was in there during the entire time that Earl Warren was governor, so he knew him very well. Rumford and Hawkins had many conferences with him.

Henderson: And I understand that you had conferences with these two men?

Pittman: Many, many conferences.

Henderson: Did it seem as though the FEPC bill was being fought for by the minorities or was the establishment involved in it also?

Pittman: Well, during the time we had I would say that the most emphasis, the main push, and the main input into the package of FEPC came from the minority group community. Now they were joined by a wide cross-section of people. The widest cross-section of support that we had ever garnered before or since in this state for a piece of legislation was done around the issue of FEPC. But so many groups helped, and it got to be a very, very wide and comprehensive group, not just minority groups, but people joining with us to get this legislation passed. I feel that there was not the thrust that came from up above. The thrust was coming from without, and it was focusing on the legislature and the legislative officials and various people. We were attempting to get statements from outstanding legislators, and all the way up to the governor's office. I feel that we were not successful in this during the governorship of Earl Warren and after that, Goodwin Knight. They gave statements and answered questionnaires to the extent that they would not push for, an if the legislature passed this legislation, would not sign the bill. Now Warren simply would not put

Pittman: himself on record. He did not go so far as Goodwin Knight did. Goodwin Knight said that if it was passed he would not sign it, that he would veto it.

Governor Warren did not make the statement that he would not sign it. But he would not take any leadership in getting it passed. He simply turned his back on the legislative conferences we had and we could not confront him with anything publicly. Byron Rumford and Augustus Hawkins had many small, off-the-record, confidential conferences with Warren. But as far as him coming out and ever contronting the group or saying anything, he simply stood aloof. He would not take up any leadership role in this.

Henderson: So you would say that Rumford and Hawkins did have private conferences with him on FEPC.

Pittman: Oh my, yes. Indeed they did. And others of our leadership in the FEPC movement had conferences with him on it. Now I went to conferences with Goodwin Knight, personally. I did not personally go in to see Governor Warren. But our leadership in the fight to get it passed went in to see Warren. Governor Knight stated to us in conference and off-the-record that he was opposed to FEPC. You see, it was so unpopular at the time that it was sort of a hot potato and a political issue and the people wanted to sidestep it if they could. Therefore, the only technique that you could use would be that your legislators and your key people would have what we would call "off-the-record," private conferences where we would attempt to sell the idea, to work with people, and so forth. Now I didn't go to those off-the-record conferences. These people that were so averse to this wouldn't have an off-the-record conference without naming the people who could come in, and it

Pittman: would only be one or two people or something of this kind. But as I have said, I did go in to conferences with Governor Knight. He stated in committee and he stated it publicly from a big platform at the Civic Auditorium at one of our big legislative conferences with thousands of people in attendance and in an election year, that he would not sign it into law if it were passed.

Henderson: Well, he must have been an exception in admitting his opposition.

Pittman: That's right. I would say that he was using it. He was like Mayor Alioto, whom I feel used the busing issue. I think that we are going to see the busing issue used just like FEPC was used twenty years ago. It has become a kind of cause celebre and it will be used as the whipping boy. They have tested the political winds, so to speak, and from where they sit they think they will get more votes by being against it than they would if they were for it. So Knight felt that the forces of bigotry were so strong in this state - which they were - that he would fare better if he were against it than if he were for it. So he didn't even hesitate. He didn't hide or anything. He just felt that this was it and they had made surveys. He felt that he was on very strong ground so he didn't have to be bought. The only time we got any leadership from the governor's office and the establishment, so to speak, was when "Pat" Brown - Edmund Brown - went into the legislature. He said that if he were elected governor he would not only take the leadership in fighting to get FEPC, he would sign it into law, he would fight to try to get it on the books. He did just that!

Pittman: He took strong leadership; this was the first time. You know that he was elected. The second time he wasn't elected but at the time it was one of the big outstanding issues in California. Governor Brown stepped up front and center and said that he would fight for its passage and he would certainly do everything he could toget it passed and he would sign it into law. And this was what he did.

Henderson: What do you think was the effect of the San Francisco ordinance on the fight?

Pittman: I think that the San Francisco ordinance simply pointed up the fact that we did need a state ordinance because we were beginning to have pressures brought from around the state, several persons pushing for a local ordinance and I think that this gave credence to the fact that we couldn't go around just continuing to pass little local ordinances, that we needed a big over-all and omnibus ordinance. I think it had meaning in that way. I think that it also helped to educate people because this was one section and one segment of the whole area of the state where we had to have an educational campaign to get it passed. We had to do so in Bakersfield first and then in San Francisco. These places where we were getting it passed locally had a great deal of influence and were meaningful in having people educated to the need of it, because they were talking about it. The fact that they were talking about it I think was very helpful to the state bill.

Henderson: Did you have a personal role in getting the Bakersfield ordinance passed?

Pittman: I gave testimony at the legislature. I was working directly with the branch there and we did everything we could to encourage the branch to continue their campaign and saw that they had certain materials and certainly helped overall. I did go down to Bakersfield a number of times. I remember that the ordinance was on the agenda for the Bakersfield City Council one night and I didn't know about it. It was at least noon when I learned that it was going to be on the agenda that night. I knew that we needed to be there. I hadn't planned to go and it was a matter of having to drive down by myself. I left here and drove steadily. I had a car that was very good on mileage so I didn't have to stop to gas up or anything, and I drove straight to Bakersfield and straight to the city hall and went into the chambers where the city council was in session. I was able to speak. Reverend Collins, who knew me and my family very well, looked back and saw me, and of course the president of our Bakersfield branch was there. I did give testimony. I did know a great deal about this and personally helped to sort of mobilize the forces in the Bakersfield area that we could get help from. We had any number of conferences.

The thing that we will never be able to document is the number of conferences, small meetings and individual contacts that we had to make to try to get people to understand the need for non-discrimination in employment. So it was really quite a thing.

Henderson: What was the assemblyman's name from Bakersfield at that time? And what was the time period?

Pittman: The time period was the '50's and the assemblyman's name was

Pittman: Williamson, I can't think of his first name. I guess it was John. But anyway, Williamson was the man.

Henderson: Was he working along with the NAACP?

Pittman: He was a very fine man and he was a big improvement - and when I say improvement I mean as far as civil rights matters were concerned - he was a different kind of man than we had had previously. He and the state senator - I believe it was Senator Walter Stern if I am not mistaken, were very helpful. This was important, too, because it was going to go from the assembly over to the senate and it was important. These were far different men, of a different calibre, so far as their civil rights outlook was concerned, than representatives and state senators we had had before in the legislature. Both of these men were fair-minded men.

Williamson's district wasn't exactly gerrymandered but he had one of those districts where he had the oil fields of Bakersfield, that were very bigoted areas; and he had another area that cut down into what we might call the ghetto area. This gave him a very, very difficult constituency. He had on one side people who were clamoring for him to turn thumbs down and not to pass this. On the other hand he was getting great pressure from his friends in the Negro community to pass it. Finally he was swayed by strong supporters of his who had an over-all influence in the white community as well as the black community, and one of these persons had been the president of the Bakersfield branch of NAACP and was very, very much interested in and a member of the State Central Committee of the Democratic

Pittman: Party. That was a cousin of mine who is now deceased, whose name was Thomas Reese. Thomas Reese worked unceasingly along with other Negroes, the president of the branch and other people. He had been born and reared in Bakersfield. He knew the millionaires as well as the people deep in the ghetto area and was very influential. He and his wife, Ethel, were close personal friends of the Williamsons. I feel that if there was any one factor which caused John Williamson not to cast his vote in opposition to us, it was Thomas Reese's influence of him. When I would go to Sacramento and to see Williamson, he would say, "You know, Mrs. Pittman, I know you and I know your family in Bakersfield but I am getting such pressures - look at these letters that I am getting threatening me with what they will do, kick me out of office if I vote for this, so I can't do it."

I would leave and immediately call Thomas Reese and I would tell him, this has been my conversation; this is the way Mr. Williamson is thinking. "He feels that if he goes for this he is going to be defeated and it is very bad." Then Thomas would personally get in touch with Mr. Williamson. I think he was sort of Mr. Williamson's conscience at that point. It was very difficult for these men. I recognize this. This is what is going to be difficult for people in the upcoming elections; and I see clearly the handwriting on the wall that we are going to have this same kind of activity, where people that have been liberal are now afraid. They are threatened by their constituency and this is the thing that keeps us from

Pittman: getting certain types of legislation. The men themselves may know that it is a moral issue and that people have the right without discrimination to use schools and to do many things. But they just made the whole busing thing an issue. We've been busing people for years. The wealthy were busing their children with the family chauffeur. Others were taking their children to private schools for years if they just had enough money to put them into a private school and if they didn't have a chauffeur they found some way to get them there. They've been doing something to transport people away from their home all along. They just are talking about this now in the political context, because of course it is the one thing that you can attack.

People didn't want FEPC so they put pressure on their governor, on all of their officials and their legislators against the passage of FEPC. If you live in any area where you want no black people in your work force, then you are going to put the pressure on as hard as you can and you are going to spend a great deal of money in the campaign to defeat it, just the same as money is going to be spent in these other campaigns in the coming elections. It is the same kind of issue. So this means that it has to be connected with political activity when you are trying to get anything done in a legislator's district.

Henderson: The members of the Ways and Means Committee, some of them might be worth mentioning as people you think played some decisive role in FEPC. Maybe the chairman, for instance, Marvin Sherwin, in 1953.

Pittman: His name isn't very familiar to me. The Ways and Means man that I am looking for was out of Los Angeles. It is so ridiculous that I can't think of his name. I might say that Jesse Unruh was a very forthright and hard-hitting man and never equivocated. He was one of the first white legislators to have a black secretary in his office. Salathiel Masterson from Richmond was very good. He is now a judge. I don't have my old rolls and books together, but Lester McMillan is the Ways and Means member that I remember well. He was chairmen of that committee.

Henderson: He was on the Ways and Means in 1959?

Pittman: He was the chairman of Ways and Means. He was simply magnificent.

Henderson: In what way?

Pittman: There are things that you can do, maneuvers that you can make when you head committees. You can call for roll call votes or not. You can maneuver times when you don't have a quorum and place a bill on a calendar when you will. There are many legal procedures as far as the meeting of a committee are concerned that will help or hinder a cause and always he tried to get his men there. One of the things that people do when they don't want to be on the spot is to boycott the committee. You just don't come in then they do not have a quorum; they cannot act.

Masterson was very fair in hearing testimony. Some of the men that are chairmen of committees will take the position that they've heard enough testimony, that they need no more. This kind of thing throttles the proponents of a bill. What I am trying to say is this has a great deal to do with the presentation of your case. He was always very fair in allowing full

Pittman: debate and full committee hearings on these things and he himself gave full support and in the limelight, never hiding back. He spoke publicly for it, the need for it, the fact that he felt that it would be a good thing for this state to have this kind of equal opportunity for employment for all citizens. So he was outstanding.

And as I say, Jesse Unruh never equivocated.

Henderson: I was told once that Laughlin Waters handled the bill for Warren. Do you remember him?

Pittman: Waters?

Henderson: Yes.

Pittman: No. I remember Carley Porter was outstanding in his opposition. He was one of the worst men that was ever on a committee. He was one of the worst stumbling blocks. I can tell you that.

Hendersnn: Can you identify him?

Pittman: Carley Porter was from Southern California. He lived in an area that is now Compton and he was very anti-FEPC. Frank Lanterman was another one that was very bad. I used to have all these people down; I knew them by heart. I don't have them down now the way I used to.

There were two Colliers - one in the Assembly and one in the Senate. Randolph Collier from Yreka was the senator and was very bad. Thomas Caldecott was just no where. I knew his family very well. They were residents of Berkeley and ran a drugstore here for many years. His father was in the legislature. He is Judge Caldecott now. But Bruce Allen was from San Jose, if I remember right, and he was very bad.

Henderson: One person that I would like to ask you about is Kathryn Niehouse.

Henderson: She helped introduce that first FEPC bill that Augustus Hawkins introduced in 1945. Of course she was in the legislature after that, too. But I was just thinking that maybe she was another outspoken person for FEPC.

Pittman: I don't recall working with her, but Pauline Davis did a very good job. Ed Gaffney of San Francisco was excellent. He was a very, very outspoken and staunch supporter.

I don't remember Kathryn Niehouse. I didn't work with her. I'm sure that some of these other fellows did, but I didn't work with her.

Henderson: When was the FEP commission finally set up?

Pittman: The commission was named and it was confirmed in 1959 by Pat Brown.

Henderson: How many Negroes were appointed to it?

Pittman: Only one and that was C. L. Dellums.

Henderson: Was he a natural for the commission or was there a lot of hassle over his appointment?

Pittman: No. He was, I would say, a unanimous choice of the Negro community and of minority groups statewide. He had been, and still is, an outspoken foe of discrimination. His whole adult life, and while he has been in the Bay Area, has been given to the cause. He was more knowledgeable about many phases of this than many people because he was in the labor movement. He knew of the need for this as far as jobs were concerned, with his work with the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, in the unions proper, and just in general. So he was one of the outstanding civil rights leaders of the whole state -- and the nation, for that matter.

Pittman: He was a national figure. We felt that it would be good if we could have another Negro commissioner, rather than just one. We felt that the case load was going to be heavy and that we would need another. But there was no thought of having opposition to Mr. Dellums himself as a person.

Henderson: Do you think it a little strange that the chairman was a white man?

Pittman: Well, here again, there was opposition to the commission. There was no one - and I say this without fear of contradiction - who was as knowledgeable and who probably "deserved" to be chairman more than Mr. Dellums himself. But when you consider that the whole matter of FEPC was so controversial at the time and that people had to be confirmed as members of the commission, that it would be almost impossible to have generated enough support so that the governor would not have difficulty in appointing a Negro.

My interpretation would be that this was an unpopular subject with many people and they didn't want the commission ever to have been enacted into law. Then once it was enacted, they wanted to certainly be sure that the commission wouldn't have any more power that it possibly could have. They wanted to get a mild-mannered, sort of middle-of-the-roader for the chairman and to get some people on it that they felt would not press. They had all kinds of dire predictions on what would happen if they passed the FEPC bill! At this time it was very unpopular. People were very fearful about it. They thought that this would be something that would turn the state upside down.

Henderson: Had John Anson Ford worked in the FEPC campaign?

Pittman: Yes. John Anson Ford was a man who had been busily engaged in community activity in Los Angeles. He'd belonged to the County Conference, which was an over-all omnibus coalition group, and it does some things to be considered liberal, if not outstanding. Still he was known and had his pulse on the community in the Los Angeles area. I don't feel that he was well-known outside of Los Angeles. But than that is the biggest area in the state. It was felt that this would be a good, safe person to have as the chairman.

Henderson: What was Harry Kingman doing for FEPC around this time?

Pittman: Harry Kingman has been a key figure and a man of great integrity and ability who interested himself in, I would say, unpopular causes, because this was an unpopular cause. He did work on leadership and gathering information and data in contacting people. In his later years he's been very conspicuous by the work that he's done in lobbying behind the scenes. He was one of the people that had many, many contacts with many, many people, a wide cross-section of people. He used these contacts to inform people of the issue and clarify things and work as a lobbyist on the side of the civil rights proponents. I think he is probably not getting around too well because of an injury he had and he has had to slacken up on his work. But he's been a lobbyist with Clarence Mitchell in the Washington Bureau of NAACP for a number of years and had a people's lobby, he and his wife, Ruth, where he worked very hard at the congressional level. He has just stopped in the past couple of years going

Pittman: to Washington during the time the legislature is in session. That is because he suffered an accident, as I said before, and he is here in Berkeley at home. But I feel that he was among the pioneers who had a great deal to do with lobbying and getting in contact with people and trying to get votes changed so that we would be able to get FEPC passed.

Henderson: Was there any talk about his being put on the commission in '59?

Pittman: I don't know whether he was directly contacted to be on it or not. But I know that he would be a person that would be sought after to be a member of a group like this. I don't remember whether he was directly contacted or not.

X. Fair Housing Legislation

Henderson: You associate the housing bill very closely with the FEPC bill, too, don't you?

Pittman: Yes, because at the time we had FEPC we had the housing legislation that was going along at the same time. At one time they were together in one bill, and then they were broken into two bills: fair employment and fair housing.

Henderson: In 1959 there was a housing statement made in the Hawkins Bill, wasn't there? So do you think that it was in the '40's that there was an over-all bill?

Pittman: Perhaps that was it. I think it was as late as the '50's. Let's see. When did Gus leave the legislature? He left in 1961. I think as late as the '50's there was an omnibus bill, but I need to research that to be exact. The fact of the matter is that we did talk about an omnibus bill. There were many people that felt that this was the best way to do it and there was a great

Pittman: deal of debate on this. Then it was finally decided and it was finally passed to get each bill as a separate entity.

Henderson: What was your role in Berkeley when the housing city ordinance was being considered?

Pittman: I was helping to spearhead a registration and voting campaign. The NAACP was taking the leadership in the registration and voting and in voter schools. I am a strong believer in voter schools and saw the need for them and introduced this as part of my personal program - to work with the voter schools to teach people how to vote, because I recognized that we had a lot of people who were voting but whose votes were just simply lost because they didn't know how to vote. They would ruin their ballot, overvote, and do many things that would cause their vote to be lost. So I felt that unless we had voter schools where people could come and where we could get over to people how to vote, the ordinance would be defeated. This was mainly the role I played, working with our registration and voting campaign.

Henderson: What effect would you say the city ordinance in Berkeley had on the state housing bill?

Pittman: I think it hindered the state bill somewhat because the opponents of fair housing took this as an interpretation that people really didn't want this legislation and were bitterly opposed to it. They took the Berkeley ordinance out of context. They felt that this was proof that the grassroots voters themselves didn't want it. So I think it had a bad effect on the state housing bill.

Henderson: How successful would you say your voter registration campaign was in Berkeley at that time?

Pittman: I don't remember the figures now, but it was extremely successful in that we did have people voting who hadn't voted before and we

Pittman: had people understanding the issue of what they were voting on. I think that we did teach many people who had never used a ballot before how to use the tools of the voting place. We got from the county clerk the same booths used for regular elections in which the people could practice voting.

Henderson: Did you lobby in Sacramento in 1963, for the housing bill?

Pittman: Oh, yes.

Henderson: Do you remember the CORE organization also lobbying at that time?

Pittman: I don't remember them having any lobbyist that was there on a day-to-day basis. I know that there were a number of organizations that went to the Capitol and they did contact legislators and in some instances had appointments with the governor. But I don't remember anyone being so outstanding that you could buttonhole them or pinpoint the things that they did. There was a man by the name of Wilfred Ussery. He represented CORE.

Henderson: Maybe that's why that organization decided to have a sit-in in the rotunda at the time. Do you remember that?

Pittman: Oh yes! They were lying around the rotunda; there were men and women. It got to be not just a CORE thing but an activity of I guess several organizations.

Henderson: What brought on this sit-in by CORE? Do you know?

Pittman: It was a tactic that CORE was using for its public relations value.

Tarea Hall Pittman and her family taken upon the occasion of the NAACP Banquet where she was honored at Goodman Hall in Oakland, March 16, 1965. Left to right: Faricita Wyatt, June Saunders, sisters; Dr. William Pittman, husband; Marcus Hall and wife Marian, brother and sister-in-law; Eugenia Greene and Clarice Isaacs, sisters.

Photograph by E.F. Joseph

TAREA PITTMAN INTERVIEW #7

December 2, 1972

Joyce Henderson, Interviewer

XI. NAACP West Coast Regional Director, 1961

Henderson: In what year did you become Acting Director of the West Coast Region?

Pittman: I became Acting Director in 1959.

Henderson: What were the circumstances under which you changed from Field Director to Acting Regional Director?

Pittman: I was the senior member of the staff of field directors. So, when Franklin Williams, who was the Regional Director left to become Assistant Attorney General of the state of California, I became Acting Director. Stanley Mosk, who was quite a friend of civil rights organizations, had become the state Attorney General. He was determined for the first time to integrate his staff. He did integrate it by appointing Franklin Williams, our Regional Director, to his staff in charge of civil rights for the state of California. That left us without a Regional Director, and I was named Acting Regional Director at that time. I went along being the Acting Regional Director for quite some time.

Henderson: And then, I suppose, when the proper time for appointment or election of someone for that job came up, it was officially given to you.

Pittman: Frank had gone to New York to take over a chore in connection with the Fight for Freedom fund. He was gone about six months prior to taking the position with the state of California in the attorney

Pittman: to Asilomar as a girl reserve, and then later as belonging to the young business women's department of the YWCA, and so, I knew about it. I was very impressed with the work that was done at conferences, and with the complete conference facility such as this, where people came and they remained. They were housed, they ate together, and they studied together and did all of these things in the comfort of having every facility there to make it really successful. It was unlike a setting in a city (we had many conferences and still did in the cities). We had a number of outstanding conferences in San Francisco. We had them in various parts of Arizona, various parts of the region, but when you came together in a setting like Asilomar, you weren't competing for people's time in which they went out to the city and tried to see things in the city or do things in the city, or see relatives that were living in the area and this kind of thing. At Asilomar they were sort of captive, so to speak, and they could do all sorts of things together. We brought the leadership people from all over into the conference.

Henderson: It was like a retreat?

Pittman: Yes.

Henderson: When did you start the Asilomar Conferences?

Pittman: Beginning in 1952.

Henderson: You must have met a lot of the leading black attorneys in California.

Pittman: Yes, Nathaniel Colley was one of the leading figures nationally.

Pittman: He took our housing case and worked with it before the Supreme Court to outlaw restrictive covenants. Under him was a group of young lawyers, just a whole bevy of them. Joseph Kennedy was one of them. All of these lawyers worked under, really, Loren Miller. Miller was the head of the West Coast Regional Legal Committee of the NAACP, but when he went to the bench, Nathaniel Colley became the head of our legal department. So, Loren Miller was the dean of it first

Henderson: Mr. Colley was a member of the board?

Pittman: I believe he was a member of the school board, and Robert Carter, the NAACP General Council for the association stationed in New York, came out to personally handle a case that culminated in guidelines being laid down in the administrative code of the state of California, whereby it was the policy of the state of California to design school districts, taking into account the ethnic balance of its pupils. Now, this was a complete set of rules and regulations that affected every school district in the state. And as I said, the object was to bring about ethnic balance.

Henderson: And these are still in operation?

Pittman: They're still in operation and they're at the present time being attacked by some of the people in the legislature and by individuals and, in some instances, boards of education who wish to destroy these guidelines and to eliminate them so they would not have to take into account the ethnic balance of students. And it was at this time that in order to effect an ethnic balance in places where it was not possible to combine districts or use many of the tools that had been worked out in other sections of

Pittman: the country, that busing was brought into being in order to achieve this. For instance, Berkeley is a case in point. The black ghetto was such that the schools were so completely black, that there was no way to integrate the school along ethnic lines other than to bus them, take children from the ghetto to the hill schools and vice versa. And the NAACP was the organization that took the leadership in conducting the study and in working out the plans for the integration of the Berkeley schools.

Henderson: When (what year) were these guidelines made a part of the administrative code?

Pittman: I think it was in 1962.

Henderson: So these rules and regulations didn't provide specific ways of obtaining this balance, they just merely said it must be there?

Pittman: It said that every known legal device for doing this would be used, and it was stated where there were districts that could be combined, where they could match districts this would be done. In other words, they would combine them for kindergarten perhaps through third grade, and then fourth through junior high, and then high school. And wherever this could be done that would be the way they would do it. Also, that they would place schools, when they were building them, conscious of the fact that the geographical locations of the schools would have a great deal to do with what the population would be, and that the school board would be conscious of this and would definitely plan to place the schools. We had a great deal to do with this in the Monterey area where we had a long struggle to try to place new

Pittman: schools where they would draw from all segments of the population and would take into account the ethnic balance of the schools.

We had this all over the state, but particularly the NAACP had a great deal to do with schools in Monterey County, and here in Berkeley and other places, too. Where this could not be done then they would use whatever they could do, and this is how we came to have the busing situation in Berkeley because there was nothing else we could do.

Henderson: At the time that these rules were established in the administrative code, who in the establishment government was helping the NAACP? Were there any particular supporters?

Pittman: Well, the same allies of civil rights that were ours from the beginning of the NAACP -- Jewish organizations, labor to a certain extent. We had great friends in labor. The other traditional allies were human rights commissions and then many people, many individuals that had had strong leadership in the white community were vocal and very busy and very instrumental in this. But most of these gains were gains that came through court cases. It was judicial decrees that helped in many of these instances.

Henderson: What was the responsibility of the superintendents of schools at that time?

Pittman: The superintendents of schools and the school board either took the position that they would, without struggle, put these guidelines into effect or that they would fight them very vigorously. We had school boards at both ends of the spectrum. The school

Pittman: board in the city of Berkeley was, from the beginning, working toward effecting the realization of the guidelines, and trying to administer the schools in such a way that they would be able to do this. There was a superintendent of schools, there was a school board and all of this in the city of Berkeley that was friendly and interested in trying to carry out these administrative guidelines.

We had other places, of course, which did not want to cooperate. Orange County is noted as being one of the most reactionary counties in the whole state as far as anything liberal is concerned that is based on race. They fought it vigorously, and many others did. But there were superintendents and school boards in various sections of the state that assisted by being amenable to this, trying to get it done, and working very hard at it. The superintendent of schools in Berkeley, of course, had a very difficult time with some of the segments of the population that wanted to resist this.

Henderson: In fighting racial discrimination in military installations, which do you feel was the hardest fight. For instance, at the Alameda Naval Air Base, what kind of problems did you find?

Pittman: The Alameda Naval Air Base was firmly entrenched with their system of discrimination based on race, and I would say that it gave us stubborn resistance for many, many years. I think of those in the Northern California area, I believe that there the discrimination was more entrenched. Their whole system, coming through their industrial relations department, was set

Pittman: up in such a way that it was almost impossible to get the kind of documentation that one needed, even though one knew it was there. They engaged in all kinds of subterfuge, and it was a real conspiracy on their part, the kinds of things that their leadermen and their supervisors did that led to the kind of discriminatory practices that they had.

They would eliminate jobs so that it would deliberately work against a black person getting them. They would post examinations and do all kinds of administrative things deliberately. They would write a description so that it would eliminate the black person that was eligible to take it, go around them, and then it would be open to somebody else. They would transfer people when they knew that they were beginning to get the kind of seniority where they would be able to become a supervisor. I would call it a conspiracy because it was understood throughout the whole base what was happening, and this was done so that they could maintain the white supervisorial positions, and that black people would have to remain where they were. They had certain sections where blacks did the dirty work. For instance, in the ares where they were working on engines, they would have that section just black. And the trash detail was black. And certain details they had just relegated black people to. We were met with just stubborn resistance. I think it was the most entrenched of any that we had.

However, Mare Island and the army base all had the same pattern. You would go in, and because of the structure of it, it would be very difficult. I do say that when NAACP, with its

Pittman: prestige and with its background and history, asked to go in the gate we were not denied going in, but once you got in, all of the things were set against you. You had a very difficult time. Of course, we not only had problems here. At Fort Mason we had a case that was really something. And then you'd go to see the people that were involved in the case, and they would not be available. They'd be in China, they'd be in the South Seas, they'd be across the world.

Henderson: The heads of the installations and bases?

Pittman: Yes. Those that would be necessary to come would all be out of their offices at the time, and if it got too hot they'd transfer them to another location. It's unbelievable the extent to which people would go in order to maintain discrimination and segregation based on race. It is just unbelievable.

Henderson: Did you feel that in Southern California there was less of this kind of thing?

Pittman: No, it was just as bad. Oh, no. I didn't want to give you that impression. Of course we had more cases that had come to us from Alameda Air, and we concentrated on it. There was no place at which discrimination did not exist. But I name that as one of the most stubborn places. I do think that some of them had worked out a system that was so infamous that it was almost iron clad. You could scarcely conclude postively that it was discrimination based on race because of all of these intricate mechanisms that they had set up in industrial relations to cover over and to go around and circumvent things so that it was very, very difficult to make the charge stick and to really make redress

Pittman: and so forth. But discrimination in all of the employment areas, both in the government and in the private sector, has been something that has just been infamous.

Henderson: So you don't see much distinction then really between Arizona and progress in this area?

Pittman: It was all bad, but when orders came down from the Navy and from the Air Force and from the Army that this must be done away with, things began to change. We were bringing the pressures both ways. We were bringing the pressures from up above,from the Pentagon, and then bringing it up from the local areas where we had our many branches. It was coming up from all over the United States, from NAACP branches everywhere. It wasn't until they began to get the pressures that we began to get some effective elimination of all this.

Henderson: Were you ever called into conferences on this with Pentagon officials?

Pittman: I did not work at the Pentagon level. The head of our Washington Bureau of the NAACP, Clarence Mitchell, worked at that level. He is our national lobbyist. He headed all of the work that was done in the Pentagon. We sent through Clarence Mitchell at the Washington Bureau cases of discrimination that we had. We documented them. When we sent them in he went in with these cases of actual men and women that were discriminated against at the various levels throughout the nation. He took these cases to the secretary of the navy, the secretary of the army, and placed our case before them. I had been in Washington, and I have been to the Pentagon

Pittman: with Clarence Mitchell, and I have been in conferences where I was an auditor, but Clarence Mitchell was our lobbyist, and he headed this along with Richard Paulhaus who was his assistant. They handled it from the NAACP Washington Bureau. It was my job to see that the cases were documented and that they were sent to him.

Henderson: By actual cases I assume you mean courtroom cases?

Pittman: When servicemen made out the complaint that they had at San Francisco Navy Yard, Alameda Naval, or the army base, or whatever, then we would ask for a hearing. They had a right to a hearing, and NAACP would represent the men at the hearing, if they asked for NAACP to represent them. The military base would have their hearing officer, and those hearing officers would have the administrative side of it. They would sit there and hear it, and then the leaderman or whoever was being charged would make a presentation and NAACP would present the case for the man. Then the hearing officers would take this material under advisement. They would go over it and so forth. Now these men were assigned to be hearing officers generally by the captain of the base, but anyway, they were hearing officers.

Henderson: Did they tend to be impartial?

Pittman: We had some that were absolutely ridiculous! We would have a recess or we would be talking with them maybe at lunch, and the men would just be furious if they saw us talking because they thought that we should just hate them, but if they were being pleasant you understood. I told the men, "We just can't sit at the table representing you and call the people liars. We may at the end

Pittman: conclude and come to the position that we can see that they lied, but until they do lie, we can't just go in and call them a liar." And they would just be furious because they didn't understand the legislative process and the fact that we had to establish our case that they had lied and all these things. We could see that some of the hearing officers would like to be very fair, and perhaps some of them were. They had a right to question people, and it was not just a right of back and forth and all -- of course, they were the moderators. You could tell pretty well where they stood by the questions that they asked or by the fact that they would not allow any more questioning or would say, "We've already covered that." But, they could be very fair in the way that they handled a case or they could not be fair. And so, of course, they would be prejudicial in the way they handled a case.

Henderson: I presume not just members of the Legal Committee were representing these men, but also the Regional Director was too.

Pittman: I represented many myself. I handled many of the cases. But then others were handled by our lawyers. Joseph Kennedy handled many of the cases; he was in this area. William Dixon, an attorney that was on the Legal Committee, handled many of the cases for NAACP. George Vaughns, one of our lawyers handled many of these cases. Clinton White was outstanding in handling any number of these cases. In late years we had Donald McCullum handle many. He is now the City Attorney for Berkeley. Donald McCullum was very active in this field. Lionel Wilson was also at the time.

Pittman: Hyawatha Roberts, an attorney, was very active. Wilmont Sweeney handled many. There were very few of our black lawyers who were in the area at least ten years ago, who were not active.

Henderson: Was the legal committee a paid committee?

Pittman: Nobody in NAACP with the exception of the regional staff received any salaries whatsoever.

Henderson: And they got no compensation from the men they represented?

Pittman: No compensation. The NAACP itself, as an organization, had organizational money that would come from the legal department of the national office to pay for the filing fees or certain court costs, but the men, themselves, were not paid. It was completely a volunteer activity for the men. And there were no paid officers. Nobody was paid. These men did all of this on their own time, and they did it as a public service. It is one of the most remarkable things that has ever happened, that our men weren't paid and that they did all of this work absolutely gratis.

Henderson: It certainly is remarkable.

Pittman: Yes, it is! Just outstanding!

Henderson: In your efforts to get FEPC in Arizona, who were some of the outstanding people you worked with?

Pittman: Well, all of the presidents of our branches in Arizona were outstanding. We had very few men who had passed the bar there. At one time we had only one black attorney who had passed the bar in the whole state of Arizona. This was sort of comparable for years and years. There was no black attorney in the state of Nevada, and this militated against us, because we couldn't get anybody to take the cases, you see, and head them and do anything about it.

Pittman: The man who was outstanding in working in the legal field in Arizona was Hazell Daniels. He is now a judge in Phoenix, and he was outstanding. He was the president for a long time of our Phoenix branch, and then he was the head of what we called the Southwest Area Conference. He sat on the West Coast Regional Legal Committee and helped with the cases along with Loren Miller and Nathaniel Colley.

And then we had other people who were very outstanding men and women that were closely associated with NAACP. We had a Dr. Robert Phillips who was the president of our Maricopa County Arizona branch at one time, and he did a great deal of work in connection with the NAACP. He was a dentist and he was quite well-to-do. His wife, Louise, was a teacher and she was very much interested in NAACP, too. They were two of the most outstanding workers we had. Many times we have had some outstanding husband and wife teams. Dr. Phillips was one of the architects of our Arizona civil rights legislation.

Other leaders in the Arizona area who were outstanding were: Jim Hollin, Thelma Evans, Roy Cooksy, Rev. Benjamin Brooks, Laura Banks, Geraldine Soloman and a Mr. /Lincoln Ragsdale,/ and Robert Horn, a prominent mortician.

Henderson: In what years did the NAACP work to get equal accommodations for Negroes in Nevada?

Pittman:

Henderson: How did that work begin?

Pittman: We have had for many years a Reno-Sparks branch of the NAACP. Reno had a very small Negro population, and Sparks had a small Negro population. They are adjacent to each other as Berkeley and Oakland are.

Pittman: Well, we had the Reno-Sparks area, and we formed a branch there because from the beginning it was a very, very prejudiced area. The way we would get an NAACP founded would be that someone who had been active in a branch in some other place would be in that area, and they would form the head of a nucleus of a group of people who would say, "Now, we need an NAACP here, because this place is so discriminatory that we need a branch to try to give us some strength to try to fight discrimination and segregation here." Well, this is what happened, and a group got together and formed the Reno-Sparks branch, because they didn't have enough people to have enough strength to have a branch in either one of those places. It was small, but always it was a very vocal branch, and it was one that all the people in it were active. Considering the small number of people they had at that time, they had a very good branch. Most of the people who were there were janitors and so forth, and there was practically nothing that people could do except in domestic service or some of the menial jobs in that area, such as, janitors, people working on the railroads and track work, this kind of menial work. This was all that anybody could ever hope to do in Nevada at that time, in the beginning.

So out of the activity of the branch came the activity to try to break down the discriminatory barriers against Negroes in that area. Now what actually happened was that Negro leaders in Nevada through the NAACP tried to influence legislators to pass laws, a public accommodation law, for instance, that would

Pittman: make it illegal for you to refuse to house people or feed people or this kind of thing in places of public accommodation. So,we tried. These leaders began to go to the legislature and to lobby for passage of the civil rights legislation. The Las Vegas branch down in the southern part of the state, and the Reno-Sparks branch in the north formed a statewide committee to work at the state capitol in Carson City. Carson City is much closer to Reno than it is to Las Vegas, so the Reno-Sparks people became very, very active in carrying on the lobbying that was done at the capitol in Carson City because they were only about thirty-five minutes away by car. Many times the two branches worked together to raise funds so that people could lobby, and this kind of thing. But often it was the people in the Reno-Sparks area that actually did the lobbying. Now, it wasn't that those people from Las Vegas never came. They did. But on a day-to-day basis in a kind of regular campaign, the Reno-Sparks branch carried, really, the leadership of it. They had very good leadership and very vocal leadership working in the same way.

Then what they began to do was to make presentations to the discriminators. Most of the housing and the food, unfortunately, was in the casinos. The casinos had the restaurants and they had the housing. There were others, smaller hotels, but for the most part the gambling industry became the focal point of the discrimination because everywhere in Nevada, even in the drugstores, there's a little machine, and all of that is under the Gaming Commission. So, the Gaming Commission became the focal point for the petition to try to do away with discrimination and segregation

Pittman: and allow people to come into their establishments. This work was strengthened year by year until the thrust that we were making was beginning to tell.

Finally, the NAACP branches met and they decided that the technique that we needed to use would be the technique that was being used in the late fifties and the sixties all over the nation. We would throw picket lines around them, and we would let everyone know that this was our problem and what was happening. And so, they did picket. They picketed a number of places of discrimination, and this then began to really tell. The owners didn't want the picket lines there. They did everything that they could do to try to get injunctions, to try to see that we didn't picket, but we were very tenacious. Now we were moving year by year, doing all these things, but leading up to this confrontation. They had the confrontations at the various places. They first had them in the Reno-Sparks area, and then they were getting ready for these big picket lines in Las Vegas.

They hadn't gone to the strip yet. They didn't go first to the strip. They went first to the ones that were in the downtown area, and then the NAACP had a conference and we set up the machinery to picket the big ones on the strip. Then people began to be aware. You see, most of the people gambling are not Nevadans. These are people who are coming in and gambling, and going out. They're just moving back and forth and coming in by plane and other means to gamble. Well, these people never dreamed that black people couldn't go into these casinos, and they began to find this out. There were just thousands of people who said, "Well, if they can't

Pittman: come in, really!" and this began to get to be a really big thing. The casino owners had met from time to time. We had met with them. I was on the committees who had met with them. They would meet and we'd have the representative of the owners of the casino there, the management people, and they said that they couldn't afford to do it, they would lose their patronage there, all these things. And finally they realized that they could not afford to have the papers and big streamers headlines that said: "Negroes to picket the casinos," and all this stuff, and they just called a meeting of the casino owners (they have an association and they called a meeting after we had met with them). We met with them until very late one night; it was midnight before we came away. We told them that we were adamant, that we were going to picket, that we'd put it off for years, that there was no place for black people throughout Nevada to stay.

They could not gamble in the places and if they went into a casino the security guard escorted you out!

Henderson: So, blacks weren't even allowed to gamble.

Pittman: Oh, no!

Henderson: After the meeting, the very long meeting, the businessmen just realized --

Pittman: The businessmen just realized that they were going to be confronted with one of the biggest picket lines that had been put in front of any establishment. We were going to the Strip and we were going to picket one after the other, and we were going to have picket lines in front of everyone of the big casinos on the Strip.

Henderson: Were these people just going to be Reno and Sparks and Las Vegas Negroes, or would they come out of other states?

Pittman: It was going to be a Nevada operation. By this time there was a large Nevada black population in Las Vegas. Although there are many, many more blacks in Reno-Sparks than there were at that time, there was never the big black population in the Reno-Sparks area. But Las Vegas now has a great big sprawling black ghetto at this time. You see, blacks were doing so much of the service work. They were not letting them work in the casinos, but they were working other places in service and doing things of a menial nature; so they had come in for that. In Las Vegas, at first we had no professionals and we had no teachers. We had just a group that had come in to the city definitely to work in a menial capacity. We had gotten thousands of people now, and so there was a big black population, and they were all over on the west side of Las Vegas. So there were sufficient Negroes there to go around all of the casinos I don't know how many times.

Now, naturally, all black people were not interested in joining the picket line, but there were enough so that they knew that this was opening up and they gave money to sustain the thing and have the NAACP Las Vegas branch to be able to take the leadership. It was really something. This was it. It was the threat of the picket line at the end that accomplished the fact. As of today this was our demand: we wanted it lifted from every single casino and every place that was affected across the board - housing, restaurants, gambling - everything, everything to be open. They opened it. The businessmen said, "It's open as of today." They didn't do it piecemeal.

Henderson: You remarked to me one time that this happened because of negotiations between the businessmen and NAACP. In other cases in other states was there a third party involved?

Pittman: Many times we have historic allies as I was trying to tell you -- labor, Jewish organizations, the Friends for Democratic Action, churches -- all of these different agencies. These have been the historic allies of the NAACP. In Nevada we had none of that. It was simply the NAACP. They carried the thrust of it, they did the negotiations, They made the strategy, and it was the NAACP by itself. This was the beginning of more cooperation, though, between the races and between other segments of the population in Nevada, such as the church and some of the political organizations. They finally formed a Human Rights Commission. This commission, of course, worked very closely with the NAACP. Many things happened after this. We first got one Negro teacher/Mabel Hoggard in Las Vegas. Then she was followed by Mrs. Edith Abbington, a teacher from Kansas. There were about three or four teachers, but after this the demand came to open up the schools, and today, Las Vegas has a black principal of a school, and has many black teachers. And they, of course, add a thrust to the NAACP's plans to try to integrate the schools. The blacks had these old, tumbled-down schools, and the pattern followed that we got old books. So we made demands that they integrate the schools, and that they would do something about the black teaching staff that they would have it dispersed throughout the Las Vegas schools, but all of these thrusts began afterwards. They sent a black man to the legislature/who was Woodrow Wilson. He had been very

Pittman: active as president of the NAACP, Woodrow Wilson. He had been very, very active in the civil rights field, and was well-known in Nevada beacuse of this. David Hoggart,one of the past presidents of the NAACP was outstanding. He and his wife, Mabel, who was one of the first teachers there, were outstanding in their work with the NAACP. We had very outstanding presidents.

Finally, we began to get a number of doctors, M.D.s and dentists. We finally got lawyers. We have a judge in Las Vegas now who was a lawyer there, a black lawyer there coming up and then finally went onto the bench.

Henderson: Do you have his name?

Pittman: I don't recall it at the moment.

Henderson: What is the school pattern like in Alaska?

Pittman: Well, black people in Alaska had a black section of the city where they lived and where it was difficult to find places to live, period. Housing still is at a premium in Alaska. So, where there is a situation where there is no housing for anybody -- I mean where it is limited, I don't mean no housing, I mean where it is limited for everybody -- then, of course, it would become increasingly difficult to find for black people, for minority people. So, a pattern grew up where we had a section of the city, where practically all of the black people lived. One of the richest women in Alaska is a black woman, Zula Swanson, and she came to Alaska early and bought property in what is now the heart of downtown Anchorage, and of course, Anchorage being the largest city, this is the most conspicuous place that one could be. She owned this property. She is a stockholder in the Bank of

Pittman: Alaska, and, naturally, she had property where other black people did not. She built a palatial home on Goose Lake on Northernlights Boulevard which is way out in what we would call the suberbs. It is, of course, a very beautiful place overlooking a lake. And, you know, she has fabulous things.

Henderson: Oh yes, you told me --

Pittman: Naturally, there were few black people like her. Then we had other people who were dispersed in other areas just as you would have them here. But it was not easy. The least bit of property you had, whatever you had, would be in sections where you would wonder why anyone would want to keep you out of that section. The housing was poor looking, modest, little kinds of houses that would be anything but desirable in a way. But, you had to fight to be there. So, we had a few people dispersed.

There was a section where we've got a black night club, and we have just other little small businesses and then housing around that area, and that's the black section.

In Fairbanks, Alaska, the same thing happened. Fairbanks is, of course, the capitol, and there are a considerable number of black people there. They have several black churches; most of them are kind of small black churches.

We've got, of course, several churches in Anchorage, and some of them are pretty good size. But Anchorage has the largest black population, and the largest population in spite of the fact that the University of Alaska is in Fairbanks, and it is the capitol and all of this. But the housing pattern always was the same, is the same. It is very difficult for black people to buy or rent houses.

Henderson: What kind of assistance or service do you feel NAACP was able to give to the natives of Alaska?

Pittman: Well, I think they were able to give the Eskimos and Indians the leadership they needed. I think that the most striking thing that they did was to give the leadership in the field of civil rights that enabled them to be able to come in and have many of the limitations against their citizenship lifted. They had not produced, and even today there are very few leaders on the scene -- of their own on the scene -- so, they had no way to present to the government of Alaska their plight or their need for lifting the discriminations against them. They were unable to do any number of things that were just unthinkable. There were many things that were directly against the natives, themselves. So, we were fighting to lift discrimination from black people in Alaska which resulted in eliminating discrimination of the natives also.

Alaska NAACP spearheaded the campaign which resulted in creation of a Fair Employment Practices Comission, and, also, the election to the State Legislature of two blacks, Blanche McSmith and Willard Bowman.

Henerson: They were treated like minorities?

Pittman: Oh, yes, the natives were a big minority group, and, of course, they were much worse off than black people because they were forced to go to separate government schools while blacks were not.

Henderson: After you retired as Regional Director you didn't remain retired, in fact, for only as long as a year. What exactly is your job at the OIC now?

Pittman: With the OIC I am a fund developer for the western region of the Opportunity Industrial Centers working directly under Reverend Sullivan in Philadelphia. I'm housed in the West Coast Regional Office, and I'm working in the nine western states. They happen to be the same nine western states that I was acquainted with and travelled in for twenty years for the NAACP.

Henderson: Do you think this had something to do with your assignment?

Pittman: Well, definitely. Reverand Sullivan and his executive director for fund raising who is Dr. Maurice Dalkins, knew my work with NAACP and I think certainly because this work had to do with raising funds in the private sector. The OIC is funded by the United States government, Department of Labor, and we have twenty-six million dollars this year in the 106 centers of the United States, several of which are in the west, here, of course. But they also have to raise funds in the private sector, and this is an organization that seeks to weld together the interest of industries and corporations with the skill program and interest in the unemployed and unemployable in developing those skills, with a view to having them absorbed by industry. And then, on the other hand, of having industry to interest themselves to help develop the program. So, I am working in the private sector with corporations heads, presidents mostly, and division managers, and those who have mostly to do with the giving of corporate gifts.

Pittman: So, this is where I am working directly with heads of corporations and industries, asking for support of OIC. Some of it is in king. For instance, IBM, the big organization gave thirty brand new typewriters about a month ago to the East Bay OIC. Now this is to enable us to have the machines for our clerical people who are taking typing.

They give many things. Many times they give their supervisors / freedom to supervise and to work as instructors. Very often they give a building -- some big corporation knows that we need a big building for a machine shop, or something of this kind, and maybe for a dollar a year they give that facility so that we can use it. They've done many things to help in kind -- that's in kind help. And then, of course, money is always the big need, and we're very interested in raising funds because we have to have matching funds even to qualify for the government's contract, so we have contracts money for the government. I'm working in the nine western states, and I'm working directly with the heads of organizations and foundations, making presentations to them, seeking funds and other in kind supports for OIC.

Henderson: On behalf of Bancroft I want to thank you for this interview. We're grateful for your time.

Pittman: Thank you so much. We're just carried away. I haven't probably in all of this interview struck at the heart of or have gotten in a capsule form, the things that have really been done. I feel a little guilty about this, because I think that I've got some cobwebs around. When you've done something like this, you have a tendency to sort of go off on a tangent. But perhaps

Pittman: in editing it will come down, and it will look like a more cohesive -- well, I almost said a more intelligent discourse. But I mean something that is coordinated in a way that doesn't seem so much like hopping, skipping, and jumping around. You've been a very fine person. I think there may be something about you that leads people on. I guess you've had this experience before, but I guess you have this facility. We don't have research we can get anywhere. This was one of our problems in our Regional Office of NAACP. We didn't ever have a researcher, and we lost so much because we had no one. This is one of the problems. This is why I don't have some of the documentation that I should have because we didn't have our researcher that stayed in the office that we could feed back the information when we came in. NAACP is a crisis organization and we were just coming and going. We'd come in and think we were going to go one place, and we'd find out something had broken out, and we had to go someplace else. So it was a thrilling thing.

I want to make it very clear that I still consider myself a retiree. My point is that I did not come on OIC staff to remain. I did feel that perhaps I could make a contribution, and I consented to come on the staff for a short-time assignment. I told Reverand Sulllivan that I could not look forward to staying on at any length, but maybe for six months or a year. Now six months has already passed, and so now, probably, I would talk about for a year or so that I could make a contribution.

My husband is still actively employed, and so as long as he's doing that, this did make it possible for me to use my time away

Pittman: from home to some extent. But any field assignment is one that has its difficulties because one is away so much. And the only thing that is different for me than before, is that I get assignments to be away tomorrow in New York city, or day after tomorrow in Chicago, or catch a plane at midnight tonight and go some place. This means that my time is very unpredictable, and this works a hardship on anyone. When your time is so unpredictable you can scarcely make an engagement that you know you can keep. And it is very disconcerting. For everyone there is something on a job that he doesn't like. And you've noticed it, too, because I obviously don't know where I'm going to be. I had an assignment for three months out of the area, and had no idea that I would be assigned in Los Angeles for three months.

Henderson: I really missed you!

Pittman: It was horrible. It was terrible!

Thank you very much for your time. You were a very interested interviewer and it was a pleasure to meet and know you.

I do feel it an honor to have been chosen by the Regional Oral History Project as one of the interviewees.

Transcribers: Arlene Weber
Marilyn Fernandez

Final Typist: Clarice Isaacs

INDEX -- Tarea Hall Pittman

Adams, Sue 91
aging, assistance to (see McLain) 42-47
Alameda County
  grand jury 62-66
  sheriff's department 67
Alameda Naval Air Base
  discrimination at 132-133
Alaska, racial discrimination in 146-148
Allen, Bruce 119
Amsterdam News 80
Army, U.S., racial discrimination in 9, 133
assembly, California (see also legislature, senate)
  Ways and Means Committee 117-118
Associated Negro Press 80
Association of Colored Women's Clubs 48-55, 83
  national convention 84

Bailey, Lester 95
Bakersfield, City of
  employment opportunities for blacks in 14-16
  history of 4-8
  racial discrimination in 4, 14-15
  passes first FEPC ordinance 105-107, 114-115
Banks, Laura 139
Barnett, Claude 80
Beasley, Delilah 78, 82-84
Becker, Bill 102
Benjamin, James 106
Berkeley, City of
  desegregates schools 130
  housing ordinance passed 124-125
Bethune, Mary McCloud 46, 83-84
Bowman, Willard 148
Brooks, Benjamin 139
Brooks, Talma 27
Brown, Edmund G. ("Pat")
  attitude toward FEPC 97, 112-113
Brown, Gladys Davis 27
Burns, Hugh 96, 99-100

busing (see desegregation, of schools) 117, 130-131
opposition to 132
support for 131
Bussey, John 25-26, 108

Caldecott, Thomas 119
California Council of Negro Women 55-62
California Federation for Civic Unity 92
California Federation of Women 57
California Apartment House Owners Association 101
California Committee for Fair Employment Practics 90-92
California State Association of Colored Women's Clubs (see Association of Colored Women's Clubs)
California State Chamber of Commerce 101
Carter, Robert 129
Chernin, Milton 47
Chicago Defender 80
child care centers 56-62
CIO Industrial Council 91-92
civil rights (see also racial discrimination, FEPC legislation)
demonstrations 69, 125, 142-144
laws protecting 69-70
Colley, Nathaniel 89, 95, 129
Collier, Randolph 119
Collins, Holstrom 105, 114
Community Service Organizations (CSO) 92
Conference of Christians and Jews 101
Congress on Racial Equality 125
Contra Costa County Welfare Department 38-41
Cooksy, Roy 139
Coppen, Fanny Jackson 53-53a
Council of Church Women 57

Dalkins, Maurice 149
Daniels, Hazell 139
Davis, Pauline 120
Dellums, C. L. 74, 79, 81, 89, 95, 120-121
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority (at U.C. Berkeley) 24-27
desegregation of schools (see busing) 117, 130-132
Despol, John 91
Dixon, William 137
Drake, John 74

employment, racial discrimination in (see also FEPC legislation) 14-15, 37, 67-68, 75-76
Evans, Thelma 139

Fair Employment Practices Commission, legislation for 70-123
  Arizona law passed 138-139
  opposition to 91-92, 95-96, 100-101, 103-104, 111, 117, 119
  support for 91-92, 96, 101, 110, 122
  ordinances passed 105-107, 113-114
Fair Employment Practices Commission 120
  opposition to 121
  Alaska Commission created 148
fair housing 123-125
Fanny Wall Children's Home and Day Nursery 48-49
Ford, John Anson 122
Friedlander, Walter 47

Gibson, Luther 96, 99-100
Goodrich, Lulu Chapman 28
Gordon, Walter 12, 74, 109
Grand Jury, Alameda County 62-66

Hall, Mansion 1, 11
Hall, William 1, 11
Hawkins, Augustus 86-87, 95, 109-110
Hollin, Jim 139
Horn, Robert 139
housing discrimination in (see fair housing)

industry
  hiring of minorities in 149-150

Jackson, Ida 28, 76
Johnson, Henry 74
Jones, Mrs. Frankie 81
juvenile correctional system, Alameda County 62-64
juvenile court, Alameda County 51

Kaiser Industries, racial discrimination at 37, 73
Kennedy, Judge Joseph 137
Knight, Goodwin 111-112
Kingman, Harry 23, 122
Kingman, Ruth 23, 122

labor and FEPC legislation 89, 91-92
Lanterman, Frank 119
legislature, California 70-71, 86
  attitude on civil rights legislation 71
Lennox, Marie 27
lobbying
  for child care centers 57-59
  for FEPC legislation 88-93, 101-102, 110-111, 117
  for fair housing bill 125
  for old-age assistance 43, 45
  for Nevada public accomodations law 140-141
Los Angeles Sentinel 80

McCullum, Donald 137
McLain, George 42-47
McLain movement 42-47
McMillan, Lester 118
McSmith, Blanche 148
Marks, Milton 96
Marsh, Vivian Osborne 27
Masterson, Salethiel 118-119
Mexican-Americans
  discrimination against 4
  in support of FEPC 92
migrants in Alameda County, welfare needs of 37-39
Miller, Loren 95, 129
Mitchell, Clarence 135-136
Mont, Max 105
Mosk, Stanley 99, 126

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
  and FEPC legislation 86-123
  Asilomar conferences 127-128
  Bakersfield Branch of 1, 105-107
  committees 67, 72-73, 76-77, 95

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (cont.)
efforts to correct discrimination in:
county jobs 66-67
hospitals 66
Nevada accommodations 139-145
schools (see also busing) 131
sheriff's department 67
finances of 138
Nevada branch 139-146
organization of 67, 84-85, 126
policy toward Communists 94
public meetings of 74, 94-95
Negro Education Council of East Bay 79-82
Negro women's groups (see Asssociation of Colored Women's Clubs)
"Negroes in the News" radio program 79-82
Nevada casinos, desegregation of 139-146

Oakland Tribune 78-79, 84
Opportunity Industrial Centers (OIC) 149-150

Phillips, Louise 139
Phillips, Robert 139
Pittman, William 28-32, 34-35
Pittsburgh Courier 80
Pollard, William 95
Porter, Carley 119
prison reform 51-52, 62-66, 67
Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) 51, 59

racial discrimination (see also desegregation, FEPC, fair housing, civil rights)
in Alameda County jail 65
in Alameda County hospitals 65-66
in Alaska 146-148
in Bakersfield 4, 7-8, 14-15
in films 77-78
in military installations 132-137
in Nevada public accommodations 139-144
in Oakland and Berkeley fire departments 75-76
in Oakland public schools 76-77
in press 78
at U.C. Berkeley 21-28, 33

Ragsdale, Lincoln 139
Ramuglia, Anthony 91-92
Reese, Thomas 116
Richards, Richard 96
Rosenblatt, Irving 92
Roybal, Ed 92
Rumford, W. Byron 86-87, 95, 109-110

San Francisco Welfare Department 38, 47
Senate, California 95-96
Sibley, Carol 23
Solomon, Geraldine 139
Stebbins, Lucy 24, 26
Stern, Walter 115
Sullivan, Reverend Leon 46, 149
Swanson, Zulu 146-147
Sweeney, Wilmont 138

Tatum, Aretha 27
Taylor, Hazeltine 47
Terrill, Mary Church 46
Thomas, E.S. 79
Thompson, Louise 27
Towns, George 79
Travelers' Aid Society (Richmond) 37-38

University of California at Berkeley 20-27, 33, 36, 47
Unruh, Jesse 118
Ussery, Wilfred 125

Vaughns, George 137
voting 50-51, 124

Warren, Earl
  boyhood 12
  as governor 46
  attitude toward child care centers 57-58
  attitude toward FEPC legislation 96-97, 108
Warren, Methias, family 11-14
Washington, Leon 80

welfare
   practice of 37-47
   residence law 40-42
   laws regarding children's homes 48-50
Wheatley, Phyllis 53
White, Clinton 137
Wilkerson, Lilly 79
Wilkins, Roy 127
Williams Franklin 89, 95, 126
Williamson, John 115-116
Wilson, Lionel 137
Wilson, Woodrow 146
women's groups 53-62

Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) 22-23
Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) 22-23

Joyce A. Henderson

Graduated from California State University, Hayward in 1968 with a B.A. degree and in 1972 with an M.A. degree, both in English.

Taught freshman and remedial English at California State University, 1969-72. Also taught at Laney College, Oakland, 1971-72.

Joined the staff of the Regional Oral History Office in June, 1970.

Conducted interviews on Negro Political History. Served as educational consultant for Regional Oral History Office.

5 2642

U. C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES
C088179269